

PART 1: COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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PART 1: COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:09 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Bryan Steil [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Steil, Loudermilk, Griffith, Murphy, Bice, Carey, D'Esposito, Lee, Morelle, Sewell, Torres, and Kilmer.

Staff present: Tim Monahan, Staff Director; Caleb Hays, Deputy Staff Director, General Counsel, Acting Parliamentarian; Hillary Lassiter, Clerk; Janet Schwalb, Deputy Staff Director of Advice and Guidance; Nick Crocker, Deputy Staff Director; Jordan Wilson, Director of Member Services; Cade Alcock, Assistant Clerk; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Minority Chief Counsel; Matthew Schlesinger, Minority Oversight Counsel; Owen Reilly, Minority Legislative Assistant; Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk; and Andrew Garcia, Minority Staff Assistant.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on House Administration will come back to order.

I note that a quorum is present.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I have been looking forward to these next 2 days of hearings because it is one of the most important and impact roles we have as a committee. These hearings present our commitment to oversight and transparency on behalf of the entire House.

As members of Congress elected by the people for the people, it is our duty to be accountable to the people. We are tasked with being good stewards of taxpayer dollars to ensure Congress and each committee is working effectively for the American people.

Committees are where so much critical work is accomplished. Each committee has a unique role to play in ensuring that Congress is serving all Americans, from factory workers to farmers to students to veterans to law enforcement to election administrators and our military. Committees also ensure we are exercising robust checks and balances on the other branches of government, like preventing the vaporization of Federal committees—Federal agencies.

Our job over the next 2 days is to hear from both the Chair and Ranking Members of each committee on what resources they need to accomplish their respective goals. In keeping with our commitment to transparency, our process to fund committees will be con-

ducted by restoring regular order, which this committee has not done since 2017.

Today and tomorrow, each committee's Chair and Ranking Member will present their respective biennial funding requests. Our committee's role is to authorize and not appropriate. It is critically important to me that our review and approval process is completed with full candor.

At the close of our hearing tomorrow, we will have provided the American taxpayer with more transparency on how Congress is spending their hard-earned money. We will continue our goal of being an open, accessible, and transparent committee, and we look forward to giving every other committee the platform to do the same through this process.

Congress will be accountable to the American people.

I now recognize Ranking Member Morelle for 5 minutes for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Chairman Steil, for your opening remarks and for convening this hearing.

House rules require that this committee must report and the House must adopt a primary expense resolution to provide funding to most select and standing committees in each Congress. The funding process is a collaborative enterprise, and it has traditionally been the most bipartisan effort the Committee on House Administration undertakes.

I would like to thank all of our committee Chairs and Ranking Members for working with us to allow this committee fulfill the obligations we are tasked with by the House rules. I would also like to note the work of the bipartisan House Administration staff who has been managing all this paper before us. Eddie Flaherty has led the effort on our team, and I would like to recognize as well Hillary Lassiter and Janet Schwalb from the Republican staff as well for their cooperation.

Over the next few days, I look forward to continuing the discussion with the committee leadership before us on their oversight plans and budgets. I know that not everyone will get everything they want, but I am confident that we can work together to make sure everyone gets what they need to fulfill their responsibilities, and looking forward to this exercise, looking forward to the testimony and the discussion today and tomorrow and in the days ahead.

With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the Ranking Member.

Without objection, all other members' opening statements will be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the committee clerk by 5 p.m. today.

Today, we will hear from the Chair and Ranking Member of 12 committees, beginning with the Committee on Oversight and Accountability. For each panel, we will begin by recognizing the Chair for 5 minutes, followed by the Ranking Member.

Then the majority and minority will each have 5 total minutes per side to question the witnesses, and I will keep the clock reasonably tight on that.

I now welcome our first panel of witnesses: Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Raskin.

As a reminder, we have read your entire written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record.

Under committee Rule 9, you are to limit your oral presentation to a brief summary of your written statement unless I, in consultation with the Ranking Member, extend the time period.

Please remember to press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on and members can hear you.

When you begin to speak, a light in front of you will turn green. When the red light comes on, your 5 minutes have expired, and we ask you to please wrap up.

I now recognize Chairman Comer for 5 minutes, followed by Ranking Member Raskin.

Mr. Comer?

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAMES COMER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KENTUCKY**

Mr. COMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for holding this committee funding hearing today.

Ranking Member Raskin and I are pleased to submit the House Oversight and Accountability Committee's budget request for the 118th Congress.

Our budget request seeks \$29.9 million. If accepted, this is a modest increase of 2.5 percent, not adjusting for inflation. This is also a combined budget request. It will operate both the committee and the select subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Ranking Member Raskin and the minority will receive 33 percent of the budget and staff positions.

Our committee's mission is to protect taxpayer dollars from fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, and works to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the Federal Government. Therefore, our budget request is an investment in oversight. It is an investment in skilled staff and a commitment to travel to conduct oversight.

To conduct fulsome oversight and meaningful investigations, the committee needs skilled and experienced staff. The committee has recruited and continues to recruit staff with oversight expertise and diverse skill sets.

Our proposed budget will allow the committee to not only recruit but retain legal and investigative staff to do our important oversight work.

Our budget request anticipates 118 staff positions for the committee, both majority and minority, with an additional 15 staff positions for the select subcommittee, for a total of 133 staff positions.

The committee and the Nation has returned to in-person work. Therefore, as part of our oversight mission, we will resume conducting a significant amount of oversight outside the Capital Beltway. The committee plans to hold five field hearings, perform site visits, and conduct investigative work in our states.

Our Nation is a big, diverse Nation. To understand America's needs, priorities, and concerns, we must hear directly from them. By resuming previous levels of oversight travel, we will be able to better conduct robust oversight on behalf of the American people.

Last, the committee's budget includes the select subcommittee's budget. The select subcommittee will be conducting essential over-

sight to understand the origins of the COVID–19 virus and lessons learned from our Federal Government’s response to the pandemic. To conduct this oversight, the select subcommittee will need staff with specialized scientific and medical expertise.

In closing, Ranking Member Raskin and I appreciate your consideration for our budget request. We also appreciate your commitment to our committee’s oversight mission.

We are looking forward to fulfilling this important mission during the 118th Congress.

Thank you, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Comer follows:]

Committee on House Administration: Committee Funding for the 118th Congress

Chairman James Comer Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, for holding this committee funding hearing today.

Ranking Member Raskin and I are pleased to submit the House Oversight and Accountability Committee's budget request for the 118th Congress.

Our budget request seeks \$29.9 million. If accepted, this is a modest increase of 2.5 percent, not adjusting for inflation. This is also a combined budget request—it will operate both the Committee and the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic. Ranking Member Raskin and the minority will receive 33 % of the budget and staff positions.

Our Committee's mission is to protect taxpayer dollars from fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, and works to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the federal government. Therefore, our budget request is an investment in oversight. It is an investment in skilled staff and a commitment to travel to conduct oversight.

To conduct fulsome oversight and meaningful investigations, the Committee needs skilled and experienced staff. The Committee has recruited and continues to recruit staff with oversight expertise and diverse skillsets. Our proposed budget will allow the Committee to not only recruit, but retain, legal and investigative staff to do our important oversight work. Our budget request anticipates 118 staff positions for the Committee, both majority and minority, with an additional 15 staff positions for the Select Subcommittee for a total of 133 staff positions.

The Committee—and the nation—has returned to in-person work. Therefore, as part of our oversight mission, we will resume conducting a significant amount of oversight outside the Capital Beltway. The Committee plans to hold field hearings, perform site visits, and conduct investigative work in our states. Our nation is a big, diverse nation. To understand Americans' needs, priorities, and concerns, we must hear directly from them. By resuming previous levels of oversight travel, we will be able to better conduct robust oversight on behalf of the American people.

Lastly, the Committee's budget includes the Select Subcommittee's budget. The Select Subcommittee will be conducting essential oversight to understand the origins of the COVID-19 virus and lessons learned from our federal government's response to the pandemic. To conduct this oversight, the Select Subcommittee will need staff with specialized scientific and medical expertise.

In closing, Ranking Member Raskin and I appreciate your consideration for our budget request. We also appreciate your commitment to our Committee's oversight mission. We are looking forward to fulfilling this important mission during the 118th Congress. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Ranking Member is recognized.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAMIE RASKIN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND**

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Morelle, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify. It is an honor to be here in this committee, which I love and which I miss. I know you are in good hands with Chairman Steil and with my friend, Mr. Morelle, for the minority.

Since the 115th Congress, I have served on the Oversight Committee, which had the broadest jurisdiction and arguably the most important mandate in the House: to ensure a transparent and responsive government accountable to the people.

Accordingly, Chairman Comer and I are seeking a combined \$29,923,637 for the 118th. This represents a modest increase in the budget of 2.5-percent without adjusting for inflation.

I am pleased to report that the Chairman and I have reached an agreement regarding allocation of funding between the majority and minority of the committee, with the minority being allocated one-third of the budget and the majority being allocated the two-thirds, the customary practice.

We are proud of the work of our committee. The role of oversight is——

The CHAIRMAN. Ranking Member Raskin, if I could, I don't believe your mike is on, which is not being picked up, then, on the live feed——

Mr. RASKIN. Oh, I am sorry.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. though I can hear you. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. I will just start again, then.

Just briefly, Mr. Chairman, the role of our committee is to ensure that our government and laws would make our working effectively, efficiently, and equitably for the American people. To fulfill this mission, we need to recruit and retain experienced staff with a diverse set of skills and experience. The committee has an extremely hardworking staff which is passionate about public service and about the mission of the committee.

The budget we have proposed and our agreed-upon allocation of funding will enable us to conduct the essential oversight work of the 118th Congress.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I stand ready with Chairman Comer to answer the questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Raskin follows:]

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Jamie Raskin
Oversight Committee Budget Request for the 118th Congress
February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding the Committee on Oversight and Accountability's budget submission for the 118th Congress.

Since the 115th Congress, I have served on the Oversight Committee, which has the broadest jurisdiction and most important mandate in the House of Representatives—to ensure a transparent government that is accountable to the American people.

Accordingly, we are seeking a combined \$29,923,637 for the Oversight Committee in the 118th Congress. This represents a modest increase in the Oversight Committee's budget of 2.5%, without adjusting for inflation. I am pleased to report that Chairman Comer and I have reached an agreement regarding the allocation of the Committee's funding between the Majority and Minority, with the Committee Minority being allocated 1/3 of the budget and the Committee Majority being allocated 2/3 of the budget, as has been customary practice.

The work of the Oversight Committee is unique, and our jurisdiction is broad. As the primary investigative committee of the House of Representatives, we are tasked with conducting robust and responsible oversight of the entire federal government.

The role of the Oversight Committee to ensure that our government, and the laws that we make, are working effectively, efficiently and equitably for the American people. In order to fulfill our mission, we need to recruit and retain experienced staff, with a diverse set of skills and expertise. This Committee has the hardest-working staff on Capitol Hill. Our staff is passionate about public service and dedicated to delivering meaningful results for the American people.

Our work is designed to uncover the truth, promote accountability, and ultimately, ensure an effective and efficient government that delivers meaningful results to the people we serve. The budget that we have proposed – and our agreed upon allocation of funding between the Minority and Majority – will enable us to conduct the essential oversight work of the 118th Congress.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

Chairman Comer, the Coronaries subcommittee from last Congress has been replaced in this Congress with the Coronaries Pandemic subcommittee.

Could you give insight as to how the new subcommittee will differ in its mission and purpose from the last Congress?

Also, what official resources does the subcommittee need to properly fund and operate?

Mr. COMER. It is going to be—we are asking for the exact same budget that the committee had in the previous Congress. I think, this Congress, we are going to be focused more on the origination of COVID-19, as well as trying to focus more on the grant process that was used to fund different types of coronaries research.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman, if I can, the microphones—although with can hear each other, I think, just fine, I know the folks—

Mr. COMER. Got it. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. involved in the live feed—

Mr. COMER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. are interested in hearing you as well.

Mr. COMER. Basically, it is the same budget as the previous Congress. The mission, though similar, will focus more on the origination of COVID-19, as well as the—we will examine the tax dollars that were potentially used for gain-of-function research, any type of coronaries research.

We are also going to look at the vaccines, you know, anything post-COVID now. I think a lot of what the committee was focused on prior to this Congress was pre and current COVID. We are going to be looking a lot on post-COVID, learn from mistakes. We are going to try to determine the extent of the American investment in COVID, not just in—in potential research, in origination type things, but as well as, you know, hopefully learning from mistakes moving forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I think many Americans are interested in the work of the subcommittee and appreciate your focus on that.

Let me shift from the big picture, if I can, into a little bit more of the mundane because I think it is important to this committee as we think about the use of taxpayer dollars.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability currently uses a document management system called Concordance. Not sure how familiar you are with this, but curious if you have insight as to how effective the software is in managing the committee's documents and if it is a software that is easy to use and maintain.

One of the things we are often looking for is shared services, ways to better leverage the purchasing power of the House. Curious if you could give us a little insight into your experience with this program.

Mr. COMER. Yes. The Concordance software, it is difficult to use. It is costly and difficult to train staff on how to use. We would like to use a more robust software package, but they are cost-prohibi-

tive on the current committee budget. These other packages are more user friendly and have better systems in place to organize and search documents and production. That is a challenge for us.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I know that is kind of in the weeds, but it is one of the things that we are looking at this committee, is where we can leverage shared services to better provide services to all committees and protect taxpayers.

Appreciate your time. Appreciate both of you being here. We miss you, Ranking Member Raskin, from serving on this committee. Maybe you will be able to return at some point in the future.

I now will yield and recognize Ranking Member Morelle for the purpose of asking questions.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to you, Chairman Comer, for being here.

Mr. Raskin and I spent 4 quality years on the Rules Committee together, so I miss spending all that time with you, but nice to see you, Ranking Member.

I want to just begin by checking in relative to the allocation by—to the minority. I know the committee is generally now splitting two-thirds/one-third, with some small exceptions. I understand you are in agreement with the proposal.

I just want to confirm that, if granted, the minority will have unrestricted access to the resources they need, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. COMER. We agreed to the two-thirds/one-third, yes.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes, but beyond that, just to make sure that—confirm that they will have unrestricted access to the research that they need within that one-third?

Mr. COMER. Yes. Yes, absolutely.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good. Very good.

To you Mr. Raskin, are you confident that you have reached an agreement which will allow you access to the dollars you need within the context of the budget agreement?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. Within the two-third/one-third split, I have every confidence.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good.

Mr. RASKIN. The Chairman will honor that and if he wants to make it more like 60/40, that is also—

Mr. MORELLE. I will leave that to you. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I thank both the Chairman and the Ranking Member for your testimony and for appearing before us today.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. The testimony has been helpful.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Am I allowed to ask questions?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. We have time remaining if the Chair and Ranking Member do. I will yield to Mr. Griffith for—

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. For his asking questions.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Chairman Comer—

Mr. COMER. Yes, sir?

Mr. GRIFFITH [continuing]. I see that you are getting 15 additional staffers. I am not sure that is enough for you all. I note that E&C is only getting eight. We have some overlap. I am just wondering if you think that you might need a little bit more? I certainly believe that E&C probably needs some more with all the oversight that we need to do. Would you agree with that?

Mr. COMER. Yes. There is a lot of oversight needed in this town, no shortage of oversight demand. We could get into an argument over how much oversight was provided previously in the last 2 years of this administration.

Regardless, we would love to have more, but I am pretty confident we will be able to manage on what we have. We have—we have requested a lot of information, and hopefully some of this information will start coming in. We—it is—I don't think this administration understands oversight yet and that is our role.

Not just the Oversight committee, but Energy and Commerce and every other committee has oversight jurisdiction. So we are ready to go, and—but I am confident that we will be able to manage. It would always be nice to have more staff.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Further, Mr. Chairman Comer, I would just suggest that—and I am sure they are already doing it—your team talk with Alan Slobodin of the Energy and Commerce oversight team. He has done tremendous work on origins and——

Mr. COMER. Absolutely.

Mr. GRIFFITH [continuing]. has a lot of holes and a lot of questions.

Mr. COMER. Yes. Yes, absolutely. A lot of good stuff coming out now, so——

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes.

Mr. COMER. More to come, I am sure.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I appreciate it and yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. COMER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. I—again, I appreciate the time of the Ranking Member and the Chair for coming before us. Your testimony was helpful.

Wish you a good day.

Mr. COMER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. COMER. Thank you all.

The CHAIRMAN. We will pause while our next witnesses arrive. We will reconvene.

I would like to welcome Chairman Bost and Ranking Member Takano of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. As a reminder, we have read your written statement, and we ask that you limit your testimony to 5 minutes.

We are going to dive right in, and I will now recognize Chairman Bost for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MIKE BOST, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. BOST. Alright. Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, for the opportunity to discuss the Committee on Veterans' Affairs' budget for the 118th.

Ranking Member Takano and I, who joins me here, we have submitted our funding request for the 118th Congress per your committee's guidance. As you know, the committee has oversight over—of the entire Department of Veterans Affairs, various programs serving veterans at the Department of Labor and Defense, Arlington National Cemetery, and our overseas cemeteries, as well as all other matters, all to ensure that the VA is meeting their mission for the over 9 million veterans, their families, and their survivors they serve every single day.

VA is the second largest Federal agency and the largest integrated healthcare system in the country, employing over 380,000 people with a budget of \$303 billion this fiscal year.

Now, since 2017, the VA has seen a budgetary growth of over \$120 billion and employees' growth of nearly 20,000. To put that in perspective, the number of employees added to the VA workforce in the last 6 years alone is roughly the equivalent of three times the population of my hometown in Murphysboro, Illinois. So, needless to say, oversight of such a vastly growing government agency is critical.

Ensuring effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars is essential for the delivery of care and services to our veterans, and wasting of those dollars is unacceptable. We owe it to our veterans and taxpayers to ensure VA is making marked progress regarding veterans' access to healthcare; wait times at the hospitals and clinics; proper use of the MISSION Act; and the backlog of disability claims; implementation of the electronic health record and, more recently, the implementation of the PACT Act.

To accomplish this mission, the committee needs essential talented staff with experience. Accordingly, we requested a 4-percent increase in the committee's annual personnel budget for 2024. Realizing that the size of the primary agency the committee oversees, I hope we can all agree that it is a modest investment to make.

At this time, we are not requesting additional resources for the committee travel and equipment needs. We, with the current budget allotted for the travel and committee, have independently been able to conduct vitally important investigations of whistle-blower complaints at various VA facilities across the country.

These investigations are essential for the establishment and establishing an accurate picture of what is happening on the ground relative to what we are being told here in D.C.

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 and the Ranking Member and the members of the committee is that we build on the oversight successes we made in recent years with the small addition to the personnel budget that I have previously mentioned.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I know that Mr. Takano will make—say more on the bipartisan work that the committee has done together and what we plan to accomplish this Congress for the veterans and their families.

I would be glad to answer any questions when Mr. Takano has finished his remarks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bost follows:]

Opening Statement
Hon. Mike Bost
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House Committee on Administration Funding Resolution Testimony
Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle for the opportunity to discuss the Committee on Veterans' Affairs budget for the 118th Congress.

Ranking Member Mark Takano joins me here today.

We have submitted our funding request forms for the 118th Congress per your Committee's guidance.

As you know, the Committee has oversight of the entire:

- Department of Veterans Affairs,
- Various programs serving veterans at the Departments of Labor and Defense,
- Arlington National Cemetery and our overseas cemeteries, as well as other matters.

All to ensure that V.A. is meeting their mission for the over 9 million veterans, their families, and their survivors they serve every single day. V.A. is the second largest federal agency and the largest integrated healthcare system in the country.

Employing over 380 thousand people with a budget of \$303 billion dollars this fiscal year. Since 2017, V.A. has seen budgetary growth of over \$120 billion dollars and employee growth of nearly 20,000.

To put that in perspective, the number of employees added to the V.A. workforce in the last 6 years alone, is roughly equivalent to three times the population of my hometown of Murphysboro, Illinois!

Needless to say, oversight of such a vastly growing government agency is critical. Ensuring effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars is essential for the delivery of care and services to veterans. And waste of those dollars is unacceptable.

We owe it to veterans and taxpayers to ensure V.A. is making marked progress regarding:

- veterans' access to healthcare;
- wait times at hospitals and clinics;
- proper use of the Mission Act;
- the backlog of disability claims;
- implementation of the electronic health record; and more recently,
- the implementation of the PACT Act.

To accomplish the mission, the committee needs essential, talented staff expertise.

Accordingly, we request a 4% increase in the committee's annual personnel budget for 2024. Relative to the size of the primary agency the committee oversees, I hope we can all agree this is a modest investment to make.

At this time, we are not requesting additional resources for committee travel or equipment needs.

With the current budget allotted for travel, the committee has independently been able to conduct vitally important investigations of whistleblower complaints at various V.A. facilities across the country.

These investigations are essential for establishing an accurate picture of what is happening on the ground, relative to what we're being told here in Washington D.C.

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 successes we have made in recent years with this small addition to our personnel budget that I previously mentioned.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I know Mr. Takano will have more to say on the bipartisan work the committee has done together, and what we plan to accomplish this Congress for veterans and their families.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chairman Bost.
Now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Takano.

**MARK TAKANO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, for having us here today to talk about the budget for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the 118th Congress.

Our committee was one of the busiest last Congress. Working together, we have had some remarkable achievements. We have passed 83 bills out of the House, and 36 of those became law, the second most of any House committee.

Chief among these achievements is what we—is that we upheld our promise to take care of toxic exposed veterans, delivering long overdue benefits and care to over 3.5 million veterans.

We made progress in addressing veteran suicide. We worked to improve veteran economic well-being by addressing the root causes of homelessness and enhanced the access to educational opportunities. We also began the overdue work to bring equity to underserved veteran populations.

While we have much to be proud of, there is still much work to be done. I thank the members and committee staff who worked with me on these efforts and who made these accomplishments possible.

The work to improve care and services for veterans will always be a constant, and the committee has also the important responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the laws that were enacted last Congress. One thing that underscores our work is that much of it is bipartisan.

Certainly Chairman Bost and I have our policy disagreements, and I—but I believe that we and our staff have worked productively over the last 4 years, and I expect that spirit of cooperation of bipartisanship to continue this Congress.

Chairman Bost and I have agreed to this budget request, and I believe it will allow us to continue our important work. Our mandate is to ensure that those who have worn the uniform of this country receive the benefits they are owed and to oversee the second largest department in the Federal Government. We do this work as one of the smallest standing committees of the House. If we want to meet that mandate, we have to have the funding to hire and retain excellent staff who understand the complexities of veterans' issues.

We also need a budget which supports robust oversight travel so both staff and members get out into the field to assess all aspects of VA's operations, including more than 1,200 sites of care spread across the United States, its territories, and the Philippines.

I want to note that past practice in our committee has been the funding for salaries allocated according to the traditional two-thirds/one-third division. However, the rest of the funding has been drawn from both majority and minority staff, including for travel and equipment.

We did not quibble over spending requests, and equipment and travel requests approved by the Republican staff director were approved by the Democratic staff director. I think we have operated

from a place of mutual respect for each other and with the goal of ensuring staff that we have what they need to get the job done.

The internal budgeting process has reflected this approach so far, and I thank Chairman Bost for continuing in that spirit.

How Congress chooses to allocate funding should be demonstrative of our values. Our commitment must be to ensure that we continue to do more for veterans than say simply "Thank you for your service." Adequately funding our committee is an important part of that commitment.

I thank you for your consideration of our work and this funding request. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Takano follows:]

**118TH CONGRESS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TESTIMONY OF RANKING MEMBER MARK TAKANO
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
"COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS"**

**FEBRUARY 28, 2023, 10:40 A.M.
1310 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING**

Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle for having Chairman Bost and me here today to talk about the budget for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the 118th Congress.

Our Committee was one of the busiest last Congress. Working together, we had some remarkable achievements. We passed 83 bills out of the House and 36 of those became law, the second-most of any House Committee.

Chief among these achievements is that we upheld our promise to care for toxic-exposed veterans – delivering long-overdue benefits and care to over 3.5 million veterans.

We made progress in addressing veteran suicide. We worked to improve veteran economic well-being by addressing the root causes of homelessness and enhancing access to educational opportunities. We also began the overdue work to bring equity to underserved veteran populations.

While we have much to be proud of, but there is still much work to be done. I thank the Members and Committee staff who worked with me on these efforts and who made these accomplishments possible.

The work to improve care and services for veterans will always be a constant and the Committee also has the important responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the laws that were enacted last Congress. One thing that underscores our work is that much of it is bipartisan. Certainly, Chairman Bost and I have our policy disagreements, but I believe that we, and our staff, have endeavored to work as productively as possible over the last four years and I expect that spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship to continue.

I believe this work strongly justifies our Committee's budget request. Although we have a very important mandate – to ensure that those who have worn the uniform of this country receive the benefits they are owed and to oversee the second-largest department in the federal government – we do this work as one of the smallest standing committees in the House. If we want to meet that mandate, we must have the funding to hire and retain excellent staff. Most of this work is not beginner's policy work, and we endeavor to hire experienced staff who already understand the complexities of veterans' issues. We also need a robust travel budget that allows both staff and Members to get out into the field to assess all aspects of VA's operations. For example, the

Veterans Health Administration has more than 1200 sites of care spread across the U.S., its territories, and the Philippines. Chairman Bost and I have agreed to this budget request, and I believe it will allow us to continue our important work.

How Congress chooses to allocate funding should be demonstrative of our values. Our commitment must be to ensure that we continue to do more for veterans than say “thank you for your service.” Adequately funding our Committee is an important part of that commitment.

I thank you for your consideration of our work and this funding request. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member.

Each side will have 5 total minutes for questions.

For purposes of the majority's time, I am going to yield to Mr. Griffith for purposes of asking questions.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In your budget request, you stated that you are requesting an increase in personnel compensation for the second session of the 118th Congress to retain up to 42 experienced employees in order to effectively oversee the VA, the second largest Federal agency.

What challenges have you faced in recruiting and retaining staff with the expertise and knowledge that your committee needs to function effectively?

Mr. BOST. Well, thank you, Mr. Griffith, for that excellent question. You know, experts in veterans policy can be hard to find, so we want to ensure that both sides have enough money to adequately compensate staff and retain them. That is the tough thing, is to be able to keep the competent staff that we have.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Also, last year, you spent over 100,000 on travel, and now you are requesting 150,000 for travel for both sessions of the 118th Congress. Is committee travel an essential part of your committee's oversight responsibilities?

Mr. BOST. Yes, it is. We travel for general site visits. We also hold field hearings to get a true idea of what is happening on the ground. That is really our job to do that. We also need to use the budget to travel to VA facilities at the drop of a hat when things go wrong because, if you wait 5 minutes, you think there is nothing going on; 5 minutes from now, it will have then happened. I also want to—I needed to anticipate the travel that is going to increase because we are now gone from COVID, and we need to get out to those locations.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Alright. Let me say, I do think that is important, Mr. Chairman, because, before redistricting, I had a veterans hospital in my district. Now it is a few miles outside of my district. When I go to visit, I always learn things and things that we probably ought to be doing here to make things better at the various hospitals.

Mr. BOST. We have got to be in the field to make sure that things are being done right.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes, I appreciate that. Mr.——

Mr. BOST. Thank you.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Griffith, might I just add one thing?

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes.

Mr. TAKANO. Chairman Bost and I have both shared a concern over the electronic health records we have—and, you know, Chairman Roe, when Phil Roe was the chair, he established a special—we established a fifth subcommittee related to—we call it the Technology Modernization Committee. We need—finding people who have that expertise in computer technology, in electronic health records, as you might imagine, trying to pay salaries that are competitive is difficult.

This is, I think, a good example to share with you in terms of just the struggles and the challenges we face in that area.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back to you, and I assume we are going to reserve the rest of the time in case you have questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely. Reserve the balance of the majority's time, and I will yield to the ranking member for the purpose of asking questions for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to Chairman Bost and Ranking Member Takano. I note that Mrs. Torres and I were members of the Rules Committee in the last session, and the two of you appeared several times in front of us. Appreciate all the work that you did on behalf of our Nation's veterans, and I know there is a lot of work left to do. Appreciate you both being here.

I want to just ask a question I will ask throughout the day, which is: Relative to the agreement you have struck, Mr. Chair, do you anticipate giving unrestricted access to the resources the minority has allocated to it?

Mr. BOST. Yes. That has always been the bipartisan way that we have handled the committee in the past. It has always—we have always taken great pride in the fact that it is bipartisan. We know that the oversight and the things that we need to do, both our staff and their staff, whether minority or majority, needs to be in the field, needs to have the oversight that we have been assigned, so that we can do it in a way—it is really about the veterans and making sure that the services are being provided. It is not about whether—what letter is behind your name.

Mr. MORELLE. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Takano, are you confident that you will have access to the resources, or are you comfortable with that?

Mr. TAKANO. I am comfortable. I am comfortable with that. My relationship with the chairman, I think, has been one of mutual respect. Certainly in the 4 years that I held the chairmanship, we have accorded every courtesy in terms of budget requests and travel requests from when Chairman Bost led the minority.

I fully expect reciprocation. I don't have any indication otherwise, and we—I have great confidence that this relationship will continue.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good.

I do note you have a pretty active hearing schedule, we had as one of the exhibits here. Appreciate that.

I am not sure—I see a couple of Wisconsin hearings. I am sure that has nothing to do with the Chairman of our committee. If you find yourselves looking for another place, we would love to have you in Upstate New York as well.

I would like to ask—I know that, in the last Congress, there was an effort that this committee helped put together across House officer teams for field hearings, established that the Sergeant of Arms coordinate with Capitol Police, and there is a series of agencies that come together and help facilitate.

Will you utilize that process? Are you aware of it, and will you utilize it?

Mr. BOST. We will—it is the same process by which we have done before, and, you know, we have got to make sure, when we have our hearings, they are secure.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes.

Mr. BOST. That is just a natural act, no matter what group is there. We hope that there are not people that would do us harm while we are out, but we always want to make sure that security is done.

Mr. MORELLE. I think it also uses the Clerk's Office for—to make sure that there are court reporters, broadcasting——

Mr. BOST. That is correct.

Mr. MORELLE [continuing]. live-streaming, et cetera. I would certainly be happy to know that you are using that system. I think it costs—it helps us keep costs down and helps make sure that they flow in a thoughtful way.

Thank you for that. Appreciate you both being here. Appreciate the agreement, and appreciate your good work.

I will yield back, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back.

Appreciate both of your guys' testimony here today, Chairman Bost and Ranking Member Takano. We appreciate that you are coming to Wisconsin, both to the Tomah facility, which has had challenges, so it is good that you are coming back there, but as well as your visit to Milwaukee.

Appreciate the work you do in what is one of the most important committees in this House, to make sure that the men and women who have worn the United States military uniform have the resources, benefits that they earned while serving our country.

With no further questions from either side, we thank you for your testimony today.

Mr. BOST. Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Have a good afternoon.

Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, we appreciate you being here today as we continue our commitment to regular order and accountability to the American taxpayers.

For purposes of the hearing today, we are going to do 5 minutes from both the Chair and the Ranking Member, and then 5 minutes of questions total from each side of the dais.

I will now recognize Chairman Westerman for the purposes of an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

Mr. WESTERMAN. Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, thank you. Members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to present the Committee on Natural Resources' budget request for the 118th Congress.

I do recognize the challenging task that you have in allocating resources among committees and appreciate the opportunity to make the case for the Natural Resources Committee.

First off, I want to talk about—about the committee, because I think there is—it is one of the most underknown or underappreciated committees in Congress. Our committee turns out a lot of work. We have got five subcommittees with jurisdiction over American energy and minerals, over insular and Tribal affairs, Federal lands and waters, wildlife and fisheries, as well as oversight of the

Department of Interior and certain agencies within the Department of Commerce and Agriculture.

We are one of the busiest committees in the House. During the 117th Congress, we were first among all standing committees with 124 bills reported. We had a total of 109 hearings, 21 full committee markups. We also took our work to 46 different destinations across the U.S. and its territories. Yet, while we are at the top of the list for legislative activity and jurisdiction, spanning literally from the Arctic Circle to the Mariana Trench. We fall to number 11 amongst committees when it comes to funding levels.

We are requesting a budget increase this year of roughly 9 percent, and that is based on authorized level for 2022. What this increase will do will allow the committee to attract and retain talented staff to address our broad and unique jurisdiction, to fund robust—and a robust travel and field hearings agenda, oversight and educational site visits, and resign and modernize our communications platform, including our website.

A top priority of the Natural Resources Committee in this Congress is to bring Congress to the people. When you think about the issues involving natural resources, this is something you really need to get outside the beltway with. We have already had a field hearing and a site—a field hearing in Odessa, Texas, and a site visit to New Mexico. we are planning to hold at least 10 to 15 more field hearings in each session of the 118th Congress.

This is the area where we need increased funding to achieve these goals. This is also a year that the compacts in the South Pacific, which fall under the jurisdiction of our committee, are being renewed, and we need to spend some time at our territories in the South Pacific and down in those freely associated States.

What we are asking for is a larger travel budget and a slight increase to be able to attract and retain high-quality staff members.

You know, with that, I hope that you will have a favorable consideration, and I hope—I believe Ranking Member Grijalva can verify the work that we are trying to do.

I will yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Westerman follows:]



Statement of Chairman Bruce Westerman

House Committee on Natural Resources before the Committee on House Administration
Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present the Committee on Natural Resources' budget request for the 118th Congress. I recognize the challenging task you have in allocating resources among the committees and appreciate this opportunity to testify.

Before I outline our budget request for this Congress, I first want to familiarize you with the makeup of the House Committee on Natural Resources, which I am honored to lead. The committee's five subcommittees have jurisdiction over American energy and minerals, insular and tribal affairs, federal lands and waters, wildlife, and fisheries, as well as oversight of the Department of the Interior and agencies within the Department of Commerce and Agriculture. This broad purview includes everything from federal forests, national parks, water supplies for reclamation projects, the Indian Health Service, mineral laws, grazing, land grants, wildlife refuges and research, all insular areas, and international fishing agreements. Second only to taxes and tariffs, oil and natural gas leasing still remains the largest source of revenue to the U.S. Treasury's coffers.

Getting even more granular, the committee oversees the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, National Trails System, national heritage areas and other national units established for conservation or recreational development. We have jurisdiction over mining and geothermal leasing, as well as development of oil and natural gas resources of the Outer Continental Shelf and public lands. The committee's scope covers the generation and marketing of electric power from Federal water projects, rights of way over public lands for energy-related transmission, recreational and commercial fisheries management, and coastal and marine environments, estuarine protection and coastal barriers.

In addition, we are honored to oversee all matters regarding the Federal trust responsibility to Native Americans and their sovereignty. The committee is responsible for U.S. relations with Native Americans, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiians, including the 574 federally recognized Indian tribes with approximately 2 million members. We also have jurisdiction over all insular areas and Freely Associated States, including American Samoa, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, Puerto Rico, and the



U.S. Virgin Islands. This purview will be especially important this Congress, as the Compacts of Free Association are set to be renegotiated this year and next.

Given this expansive scope, I'm proud to note that, regardless of political party, the Natural Resources Committee is one of the busiest, if not *the busiest*, House Committee by volume. During the 117th Congress, we ordered 124 bills reported, first amongst all standing committees. We filed 88 bill reports, more than any other committee. We held a total of 109 hearings and 21 full committee markups. Republican Members and staff traveled to 21 different destinations and Democrat Members and staff traveled to 25 destinations all over the U.S. and its territories advancing the agenda of the committee. These efforts are critically important to Members and the American people we serve. Yet while the Committee on Natural Resources is at the top of the list for legislative activity and has jurisdiction spanning the Arctic Circle to the Marianas Trench, we fall to number 11 amongst committees when it comes to funding levels.

We have a robust agenda at the Committee on Natural Resources' reach this Congress, so I'm providing some further context for this budget request. The committee will hold the Executive Branch accountable in our efforts to strengthen America's environment and economy, promote access to public lands and natural resources, and enhance conservation through innovation. Oversight will be a priority, as the committee oversees a multitude of agencies that last year spent a combined \$43.4 billion. The committee will also review all laws and programs within our jurisdiction to assess their application, administration, execution, and effectiveness while providing transparency and accountability. Through such examination, we will continually seek to eliminate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement and ensure every taxpayer dollar is well-spent.

The committee will also focus on:

- Promoting responsible land management, access, forest health, and wildfire prevention;
- Saving a national treasure, our Giant Sequoias, as they face continue threat of catastrophic wildfire;
- Examining deferred maintenance at our national parks and public lands;
- Managing our fisheries responsibly;
- Increasing water supplies, water storage, and drought resiliency;
- Examining the ongoing drought impacting communities throughout the seven-state Colorado River region;
- Advancing American energy and minerals production and the jobs and economies they support;



- Examining ways to streamline the leasing and permitting of renewable energy and conduct oversight of the administration's actions that hinder renewable energy and infrastructure development;
- Modernizing environmental laws like the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA);
- Improving economic opportunity and stability in Indian Country and the U.S. territories;
- Conducting oversight of the implementation of the Compacts of Free Association and assistance provided by the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs.

As you can see, we have a lot to do! To continue to advance the important work of the committee this Congress, we are requesting a budget increase of more than 9%, based on our authorized levels for 2022. We will continue to dedicate the majority of our budget to personnel compensation, and this year's request will help us retain and build a deep bench of expert staff to handle the many diverse issue areas within the committee's broad geographic and subject matter jurisdiction. As with any transition into the majority, we are working diligently to expand our team and continue to support all our Members and their priorities. Ranking Member Grijalva has requested an increase in the salary allocation for the minority budget for the same purpose.

I hope my description of the committee's jurisdiction helps you to see that the Committee on Natural Resources traverses not only the country, but also the globe, and our ability to govern is informed by experiencing firsthand the effects of the federal government's policies outside of the beltway. It is critical we hear from the communities affected and understand matters on a local level. To this end, I have already planned an aggressive schedule of field hearings for both sessions of the 118th Congress. The Committee on Natural Resources will bring Congress to the people. Indeed, we have already executed one field hearing, and look forward to hearing about the issues faced by the American people, our lands and waters, and recognize that those will not always be found in Washington. Field hearings, on-site educational opportunities, and oversight visits for Members are among the highest priorities for the committee this Congress. This activity will generate a significant increase in travel and is the main driver in the committee's increased budget request.

On February 13th, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held the first of this year's field hearings in Odessa, Texas, addressing how federal energy production supports local communities. Members and staff also participated in field tours in Hobbs, New Mexico, where they toured an oil rig and natural gas hydraulic fracturing site, as well as the Career and Technical Education Center. This was the first of at least 10 field hearings and educational tours



I plan to conduct this year, and it took place less than two weeks after the committee officially organized. This affirms my commitment to getting out of Washington and into the field.

In addition to my commitment to take the business of the Committee on Natural Resources to the American people, I am also committed to making the committee work for Congress. As republican leader of the committee, I committed to improving and focusing on Member services. To that end, last Congress the committee tracked 4,500 interactions with Republican Members, who introduced more than 300 bills and held 15 Republican forums. In the 118th Congress, the committee will increase Members services and our focus on advancing local issues to find solutions for the American people.

The Committee on Natural Resources also pioneered the use of an electronic voting system for our markups. This system has been an effective and efficient tool in advancing committee business. Now that we are back to operating in-person, we have returned to using this system to its full potential. Today's budget request would ensure that the electronic voting system and other useful technologies are appropriately supported this Congress. We seek to maintain and improve operations of equipment necessary to handle the committee's frequent hearings, publications, and other needs.

The committee has successfully incorporated the use of cost-saving measures and efficiencies while still operating at the highest levels and advancing important legislative priorities. Our field hearing was the first time we were able to benefit from the support of the House Recording Studio technicians to support us in the field. Their technical know-how served as an invaluable resource, and we look forward to calling on them again to support future field hearings. The staff has also maximized use of the Committee on House Administration's educational series as well as Staff Academy courses for internal training and professional development. Finally, the use of House-wide subscription services has been a benefit and cost saving measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to develop and explain this budget request. It is a critical task and your decision will directly impact the work we do at the Committee on Natural Resources. I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chairman Westerman. Ranking Member Grijalva is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and also thank the Ranking Member for the opportunity. I am pleased to be here with Chairman Westerman to ask for your support for the Natural Resources Committee budget for the 118th—

The CHAIRMAN. Will the Ranking Member yield? Is your microphone on? I can hear you clearly, but I know our live feed may not.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Is it on now? Shall I start over, or no?

The CHAIRMAN. Please continue.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you.

As the chairman mentioned, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the work of our committee. Our jurisdiction includes vital issues that go to the heart of so many of people's lives in this country. We oversee our people's public lands and waters, including conservation, recreation, and development, that multi-use mission of the committee. We are stewards of the very sovereignty of the Tribal Nations that we have and have been since before the Constitution.

We have the responsibility of promoting self-determination and the well-being of U.S. territory and freely associated States. Those are important responsibilities, huge responsibilities of the committee that we collectively take very seriously. We are at the center of Federal efforts toward environmental justice, and we are a vital—and that concept has been made a vital component of any response to the climate crisis.

Our committee oversees our national parks, wildlife refuges, fisheries, and other water resources in places of severe drought. We conduct oversight of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and an array of other bedrock statutes.

Over the last Congress, as the Chairman indicated, the committee and its staff were extremely productive. In the 117th, we had about 893 measures referred to us, held 141 official meetings, 21 full committee meetings, and filed 142 committee reports. Our friends at Energy and Commerce were second with 79 reports, a little less than half of what we produced.

All told, our committee has passed scores of bills out of the House, and 149 passed Senate and became law—149.

In the recent Congress, we have consistently punched above our weight. Although Chairman Westerman and I have a degree of policy difference, to say the least, and we feel quite strongly in our positions and our philosophies toward that multiuse concept in our jurisdiction, we do agree on the importance of our shared work and that sustaining this level and the quality of activity requires a full roster of majority, minority, and nonpartisan staff.

We want to attract and keep the best, and these skilled and dedicated public servants are needed now more than ever, and the resources help us retain and also bring into our personnel and into our professional ranks really, really good people that will serve the American people.

I know that Chairman Westerman understands the importance of the resources for the minority. Having recently him being the Ranking Member in the previous Congress, we hope that the courtesies that we extended to each other as we move forward—there was a point in which the minority needed additional resources that we, as the majority, were glad to provide because we understand that this is a shared responsibility we have, and we will be bugging the Chairman to return the courtesy at some point, but that—your allocation to us will go a long way to the discussion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Grijalva follows:]



The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee, thank you.

I am pleased to join with Chairman Westerman to ask for your support for the Natural Resources Committee's budget for the 118th Congress.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the work of our Committee. Our jurisdiction includes vital issues that go to the heart of so many people's lives.

We oversee the People's public lands and waters, including for conservation, recreation, and development.

We are stewards of the very sovereignty of the tribal nations that have been here since before the Constitution. We have the responsibility of promoting the self-determination and well-being of the U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States.

We are at the center of the federal efforts toward environmental justice, and we are a vital component of any response to the climate crisis.

Our Committee oversees our National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, fisheries, and our water resources in places of severe drought. We conduct oversight of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and an array of other bedrock statutes.

Over the last Congress, the Committee and its staff have been extremely productive. In the 117th, the Committee:

- Had 893 measures referred to us.
- Held 141 official meetings, including legislative and oversight hearings and 21 full committee markups.
- Filed 142 committee reports. That is far more than any other legislative Committee. Our friends at Energy and Commerce were second, with 79 bill reports, or a little over half as many as us.

All told, our Committee passed scores of bills out of the House, of which 148 passed the Senate and became public law. Yes, 148.

In recent Congresses, we have consistently punched above our weight.

Although Chairman Westerman and I frequently disagree on policy — and quite strongly — we do agree on the importance of our shared work, and that sustaining this level and quality of activity requires a full roster of Majority, Minority, and nonpartisan staff.

We want to attract and keep the most knowledgeable, skilled, and dedicated public servants. These resources help us on both sides to do the best possible work for the American People.

I also know that Mr. Westerman understands the importance of resources for the minority, having recently been Ranking Member.

We have a lot of work ahead of us.

In closing, I want to thank you again for allowing us to present our budget request today. Chairman Westerman and I are pleased to join together on this request, and we appreciate the consideration.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the Ranking Member.

The majority and minority will each now have 5 total minutes to ask questions.

I will now yield to Mr. Carey for purpose of asking questions for 5 minutes.

Mr. CAREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva, really appreciate your testimony today.

Also, I know, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned that this is one of those committees that a lot of people don't watch. I will tell you I spent 25 years watching the committee, sometimes with seeing the good things you did and sometimes not so good.

One of the things that you mentioned in your questionnaire was that of field hearings and onsite educational opportunities and increased oversight visits are among some of your highest priorities.

I would agree with that because I think it is very difficult for you doing what you are doing. When you are looking at critical minerals, when you are looking at our energy deposits, it really is important to be on the ground.

What additional resources does your committee need in order to perform these important oversight functions?

Mr. WESTERMAN. That is a great question. I appreciate that.

You know, first off, you need staff. You can't—to plan these hearings takes a lot of logistics and a lot of effort, so we need staff to be able to do all of the planning and to make the field hearings worthwhile.

When we did the Odessa field hearing, we were able to take folks from the recording studio down there, which gave the hearing a much higher quality presentation.

We also need the funding to do that. It kind of comes down to quality—the quality staff and funding, and those two also go hand-in-hand.

Mr. CAREY. I thank you for that, and I would agree with that.

The other thing—and, Mr. Chairman, I think you were the one that mentioned—in your budget request, you mentioned that the Committee on House Administration's recent "Running an Effective committee in the Majority" series and new professional development programs offered by the CAO have been beneficial to your committee staff.

What additional training would you like the committee or the COA to provide—or CAO to provide?

Mr. WESTERMAN. Yes, we have had staff take advantage of the CAO training, and I think that is very important when we don't—not only want to take quality staff in; we want to be able to develop those staff to even higher quality.

The programs that CAO offered gives our staff the opportunity to do that, and I do appreciate the committee's emphasis on that and can say thank you from our committee for the opportunities for our staff to have professional development.

Mr. CAREY. Last question, and the Chairman, what are the challenges that you foresee for your committee during this 118th Congress?

Mr. WESTERMAN. It is always a challenge when you are dealing with the issues that we are talking about inside a building here in

D.C. to see the real effect that is happening out in the real world, and we are talking about mining. We are talking about oil and gas extraction. We are talking about fishing. We are talking about Tribal issues and forestry, and nothing takes the place of being out in the field, seeing what happens in real life.

I know, as a forester, you can talk about it all you want in a room, but, when you are standing out in the forest and you are looking at poor management or good management, it will make the light bulb come on. It is a challenge for us on the educational side to make sure that we are making policy based on the best science and data and facts. The way to do that is to get out in the field and talk to people who are facing the issues every day.

Mr. CAREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your comments and wholeheartedly agree with your sentiments.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. We reserve the balance of our time.

I recognize the Ranking Member for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to you, Mr. Chairman; you, Mr. Ranking Member, for all of your hard work and your stewardship of the committee.

Since you were talking about field hearings, I want to just get a sense—I asked this of the previous Chair and Ranking Member when they came in—within the last Congress, there was a system developed that coordinates Sergeant at Arms, Capitol Police, the Clerk's Office for purpose of court reporters, the Chief Administrative Officer around broadcasting and live-streaming, et cetera.

Do you intend to use that system that has been developed to conduct your field hearings?

Mr. WESTERMAN. We do intend to use that like we did on the first field hearing that we did.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good. Just so I can be assured of this, I know—I appreciate the fact that you two have agreed on budget and distribution of resources.

Mr. Chairman, do you expect that you will give unrestricted access to the resources that the minority has coming to them?

Mr. WESTERMAN. Yes. We have—tradition has been we divide the resources up two-thirds and one-third, and that is the plan to do that going forward.

Mr. MORELLE. Great, and so you commit to making sure that they have access to the resources that you have allocated for them?

Mr. WESTERMAN. Correct.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes. Mr. Ranking Member, are you confident that you will have access to the resources you need within the allocation?

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes. Yes, I do. I don't have a question about that. In my time on this committee, that has been a—if not a policy, a tradition that has happened without question, and I have full confidence that is going to occur.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I appreciate both of you being here with us today. It is our commitment to openness, to regular order, and to transparency. I ap-

preciate your committee's commitment to a robust oversight agenda this Congress.

Thank you for being with us today.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you. Now we will go back to a hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. We are going to continue with our hearing.

I thank Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member Boyle for being with us today.

Today is our continuation of being open and transparent to the American people and returning the House to regular order.

We appreciate you being here.

We are going to recognize both the Chairman and the Ranking Member for 5 minutes for the purpose of opening statements, followed by 5 total minutes of questions from both the minority and the majority before us.

Chairman Arrington is now recognized for the purpose of making an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JODEY C. ARRINGTON, A
REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. ARRINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Morelle. Appreciate y'all's leadership.

We have to run our House responsibly, like every hardworking American. We talk a lot about getting our fiscal house in order. I appreciate that House operations go beyond just the resources and making sure that we are doing the right things the right way with the American people's resources. I appreciate the job that you all do to endeavor to that goal.

I want to start by saying, Brendan Boyle is my Ranking Member, a friend and a colleague from our time on Ways and Means. We will have differences of opinion, sometimes wildly different. We will debate in a very robust way and hopefully a very thoughtful way. I am very excited about serving alongside of my Democrat colleague.

Next I would like to address the issue at hand directly in terms of resources for our Budget Committee operations.

I contend that the Budget Committee is an A committee because there is not a bigger problem to solve, there is not a greater challenge that we face as a Nation than our runaway spending, most of which is on auto-spend on the mandatory side, and this unsustainable fiscal path that our country is on. If we don't intervene, I think the outcome will be disastrous—and possibility irreparable—if it is a sovereign debt crisis.

Whether it is a sovereign debt crisis or this slow economic demise of the greatest country and greatest economy in the world, we lose our influence in the world as a result, our ability to defend our homeland, our ability to provide security for our seniors, and the list goes on of laudable and righteous things that we do as a Nation for our fellow citizens. That all can be undone and undermined if we don't get our fiscal house in order.

I would also say that Republicans have contributed their fair share to this irresponsible fiscal State of the Union. While I am definitely going to beat up on my Democrat colleagues and this President for the 5 trillion in additional deficit spending in just the last 2 years, I recognize that fiscal irresponsibility is not unique to

one party or the other. If we see it any differently, we will never work together to solve this problem.

The fact is that is the truth, but it is also the only way to get everybody in the boat and rowing, as I said earlier, away from the waterfall, the Niagara Falls of the fiscal cliff that we are heading to rapidly.

To me, we have got a lot of good things that we can do for our country, a lot of very difficult decisions to make. All the easy decisions, Mr. Ranking Member, I think have been made, if there were any. We now have the tough decisions to make, and we need the best team and the best operation.

We need to lead by example. My recommendation is that we don't increase our budget. I may come back next year and we may decrease it because we are going to have to cut spending, we are going to have to grow the economy, and we are going have to deal with the real debt drivers.

I don't know how in the world—first principle of leadership, Mr. Boyle, where I come from in Texas, I bet your people in Pennsylvania feel the same way—first principle is you lead by example.

We are in 2023 now, so let's just keep the 2023 budget at 2022 levels. Let's keep the split the way it is. I think we are as generous to the minority as any committee, if not the most generous. That was tradition, not just our proposal.

Let's try to make do with the moneys we have committed, and maybe we come back and look for ways to reduce that and continue on our great mission here to save the country from a debt crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Ranking Member, for the opportunity. With that, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Arrington follows:]

**Draft Statement of the Honorable Jodey C. Arrington
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
February 28, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Budget Committee's funding resolution for the 118th Congress. Given the current state of fiscal affairs we face in this country – runaway deficit spending and an unsustainable debt trajectory – it is imperative that we lead by example in being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Therefore, we are requesting that the Budget Committee's annual funding level for the 118th Congress remain frozen at the 2022 level. This requested amount will ensure that the Committee has the necessary resources to accomplish our current and future priorities.

Historically, the Budget Committee has maintained a bipartisan tradition of allocating its resources between the Majority and the Minority and I intend to continue this tradition. In the past, the Committee has allocated one-third of the Committee's budget to the Minority to ensure that both the Majority and Minority have adequate resources to carry out the Committee's responsibilities and maintain a highly professional staff.

We take our oversight responsibilities seriously and once the Committee completes its work on the fiscal year 2024 budget resolution, the Committee plans to hold several hearings on federal spending. These hearings would examine federal spending to identify both areas where spending for federal programs has been efficient and effective, as well as wasteful and unnecessary. Budget process reforms are another important tool to control federal spending and we plan on using our resources to pursue these reforms, working with my friend, the Ranking Member, Brendan Boyle.

I believe that our funding request is both responsible and disciplined to ensure that our resources are used wisely and efficiently, and it is my understanding that Mr. Boyle supports this request and our plans for the management of the Committee's funds.

I am honored to lead the Budget Committee and play an important role in protecting our children's future from the mountains of debt we have built. I hope to use the valuable resources you provide us to do just that. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. The Ranking Member is recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. BOYLE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, as well as to the members of this committee.

Let me first thank Chairman Arrington, my friend Jodey, for his leadership in developing our committee budget. I am proud to say that on this budget we agree. That might not extend to another budget that we will be debating, but on this budget we happen to agree.

First, let me just point out to my Republican friends, you could not have made a better choice when it comes to your choice for Chair of the committee, a bright, hardworking, patriotic member of Congress, and I am proud to call him a friend.

We will have good, principled, hopefully insightful debates. Then, ideally, we will arrive at the right decision, and hopefully in the end the American people will be better off for it. In the end, I know in his heart that is what he wants for our country, and that is what I want as well.

In terms of the specifics for our budget on the Budget Committee, the majority will make one-third of the funding and resources available to the minority for personnel. That is exactly consistent with past practice. Also consistent with the past, the majority budget will continue to cover equipment for both staffs, ensuring the same quality and access for both majority and minority.

We are in full agreement on a flat budget for this year. I happen to wish the committee had more funds to execute its responsibilities. With that said, I agree with the chairman that the funds that are being provided here will be sufficient.

I have been fortunate enough, despite the fact that going from majority to minority obviously our side is taking the bulk of the hit, nonetheless we have been able to retain the entirety of the minority staff, with one unfortunate exception.

I also want to credit my predecessor, Chairman Yarmuth, who strategically did not fill positions when they were becoming open and we had personnel who were retiring in order to be prepared in case we were to be in the minority. That advanced planning made this process a great deal easier.

While I am thinking of it, I know Jodey would share in this, I want to thank Gary and Greg behind me, Gary Andres and Greg Waring, the Republican and Democratic staff directors, respectfully, who have done a wonderful job to date.

I want to reiterate what an honor and privilege it is to serve as Ranking Member of the Budget Committee. I am hopeful that, despite our honest and principled policy differences, the Chairman and I will be able to find common ground on more than just our committee budget.

With that, I will do something all too rare in this House, yield back the remainder of my time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Boyle follows:]

**Statement of Ranking Member Brendan F. Boyle
U.S. House Committee on the Budget**

**Hearing on “Committee Funding for the 118th Congress”
Before the U.S. House Committee on Administration**

February 28, 2023

Thank you Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of this Committee for providing the opportunity to testify on the Budget Committee’s funding for the 118th Congress.

Let me first thank Chairman Arrington for his leadership in developing our Committee budget and thank his staff for working closely with my staff on this effort. While we may not agree on the overall budget policy, I am pleased to join Chairman Arrington today in support of his funding request for the Committee. I had the pleasure of serving with him on the Ways and Means Committee and I am honored to serve with him on the Budget Committee.

While this is my first time serving as the Ranking Member on the Committee, I am not new to the Committee. I know from experience that there is a strong tradition of collegiality and bipartisan cooperation in the operations of this Committee.

In keeping with that tradition, the majority will make one-third of the funding and resources available to the minority for personnel. As in the past, the majority budget will continue to cover equipment for both staffs, ensuring the same quality and access for both majority and minority.

Although I wish the Committee had more funds to execute the legislative and oversight activities of the Committee under the rules of the House, I agree with the Chairman that the funds will be sufficient and fair toward the minority staff.

While the Committee’s budget will remain flat this year, I have been fortunate enough to retain most of the minority staff. We have a veteran crew on the Democratic side. It is a great and experienced team and it is my pleasure to be working with them. It is, however, important that they continue to receive fair compensation commensurate with their credentials, experience, and loyalty to the Committee.

Before I close, I want to reiterate what an honor and privilege it is to serve as Ranking Member on the Budget Committee and I am hopeful that, despite our policy differences, Chairman Arrington and I will be able to find common ground on more than just our Committee budget.

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

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate that. Also rare to see a budget request come in with a zero percent increase. We appreciate that as well.

Chairman Arrington, you and I have had a chance to talk previously about kind of the broken budget process reform. You come in with a zero percent increase.

One of the priorities that you set forward is really looking back at the budget process, coming forward with nonpartisan legislation as it relates to fixing the underlying process that continues to allow this institution to not get its job done.

Do you think you have the resources you need to move forward with, I think, that really important priority under the budget you set forward today?

Mr. ARRINGTON. I think fixing the broken process, because fundamentally having systemic problems with the institution, or i.e., broken process, is very difficult to yield anything but broken outcomes.

I am a big proponent of bipartisan process reforms. We started a group—we call it a caucus, it is actually not an official caucus—where we had at one time 30 Democrats and 30 Republicans, Mr. Morelle, who looked at soup to nuts why and where this process breaks down so often, and we end up with a Four Corners massive spending bill that nobody feels good about in the end. I suspect Democrats don't feel any better than Republicans. Even if your pet projects on either side are buried in this spending, it is just not good business.

I don't know another government in the world—we will look together at how other governments run—but I don't know a government in the world that has such a dysfunctional process.

From the most benign sort of biennial budgets consideration, to fiscal State of the union in a bipartisan, bicameral way, to really shine a light for the American people on the math, not the different ways of fixing it from my view or my colleague's view, but just the mathematic reality, and some of the reality of the broken process, to debt targets, debt-to-GDP.

I know Sheldon Whitehouse, who is chairing the Budget Committee in the Senate, is big on the debt-to-GDP targets with a glide slope down. I love that idea.

I think there is a long list of things that we could propose. Scott Peters and I from San Diego, Democrat, introduced the Responsible Budget Act that would actually replace the debt ceiling with real debate over real reforms.

I guess the bottom line is the American people see a lot of the conflict and contentiousness. What they may not see enough of, unfortunately, if they are watching cable news, is that we have a lot of common ground and consensus around making this process work better.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I am totally committed. We are going to get through our budget resolution process early on and through this debt ceiling negotiation.

Once we get further out into the open, it is going to be a great and satisfying endeavor to go with Brendan Boyle and my Democrat colleagues into the process and make those fundamental reforms.

The CHAIRMAN. Appreciate it. It is an issue I think that I would love to see legislation come out this Congress to really fix the broken underlying process.

One quick follow up in the minute that we have left is, we look at your oversight role, both over the Congressional Budget Office, but over Federal spending writ large and the Federal budget writ large, do you think you have the resources on the oversight side? The oversight piece is going to be a huge, important piece this Congress.

Mr. ARRINGTON. I see the House Budget Committee's responsibilities much more broadly I think than some. It is not just a budget resolution. To me, we are the budget accountability committee. We should look at the spending, the consequences of inflation and high interest rates. We should look at economic growth.

One percent of GDP growth over a 10-year horizon is \$3 trillion. We shouldn't accept that it is just 1.7 or 1.8 or whatever the CBO is projecting. We have done better. We can do better.

I have a broader view of pro-growth, pro-work, pro-energy policies that will help this country grow again so we can do what they did in World War II or after, which is bend the spending but grow the economy, and get us back to that solid footing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you very much.

Thank you to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Ranking Member. I have great confidence that, having spent the last 4 years as a member of the Budget Committee, I really appreciate your devotion to task.

I will just note parenthetically, too, you used Niagara Falls in your analogy, I wouldn't entirely necessarily embrace the analogy, but do appreciate an Upstate New York reference. You are welcome to come to Niagara Falls any time and we would be happy to host you.

I would love to work with you both on making certain that our country's fiscal health is in order and provides growth and opportunity for not only this generation, for a generation of Americans to come. I look forward to that.

As the chairman said, our responsibility here is to look at the agreement you have reached, and appreciate the fact that you have reached an agreement and the two of you are in accordance on the distribution of resources.

I just want to ask you, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate the fact that you made the distribution. I am asking each of the Chair just for the record, want to make sure that you are comfortable with and will allow unrestricted access to Ranking Member Boyle for his portion and allocation in the budget over the next year.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Well, we are committed to that. If it is not on paper, we will put it on paper. He has my word. I want him to feel good about it. The conflicts shouldn't be resources between our colleagues, it should be on ideas that are debated. I am committed to that.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, I appreciate that and I am happy to take your word for it. I don't think we need to put it in writing. But I do appreciate that.

To the Ranking Member, who is a longtime friend and somebody I have enormous confidence in, are you comfortable with the arrangement and feel as though you have the resources within the agreement you reached to be able to do what you need to do?

Mr. BOYLE. Yes. Two things on that.

First, I absolutely take Jodey's word for it and appreciate his pledge on that.

Second, I would say, I mean, let's be candid, we are no longer in a period in which either political party has a permanent majority in this Chamber. I have served in the minority, the majority, the minority. The House is probably 50-50 up for grabs facing next election. I think it serves both sides well to be fair to one another when it comes to these sorts of things because today's majority will at some point be tomorrow's minority, and then the day after that will be the majority again. That is just the reality that we are in.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, I appreciate it. I actually appreciate very much—I know we are going to have—we have had several folks come in prior to this and we will have many more to come. I really appreciate the sincerity which I think you both exhibit and demonstrate, and your willingness to work together. We are not going to always agree on policy, but I certainly appreciate agreement on civility and conducting ourselves in ways that the American public would be proud of.

Thank you for being here. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate the Chairman and the Ranking Member's time today, part of our commitment to regular order and restoring accountability in today's government. Thank you very much.

I thank the Chair and the Ranking Member for coming in today. Today's hearing is all part of our commitment to, one, restoring regular order here in the people's House, but also transparency and accountability to the American people.

We are going to recognize both the Chair and the Ranking Member for 5 minutes for purposes of opening statements. Then, the majority and the minority will have a total of 5 minutes to ask questions in follow-up.

I will now recognize Chairman Tom Cole for the purpose of an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM COLE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Mr. COLE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, old friends, like my friend Mrs. Torres. This is a great committee. It is a pleasure to be here.

Thank you for inviting me to testify on the budget request for the Committee on Rules for the 118th Congress. I appreciate the thoughtful and deliberate work you do to ensure that the committees have the resources they need to fulfill our constitutional mandate.

Along with my partner and very good friend on the committee, Ranking Member Jim McGovern, I respectfully request level fund-

ing for the 118th Congress to carry out our institutional responsibilities on behalf of the American people.

As my colleagues who previously served on the Rules Committee, Ranking Member Morelle and Mrs. Torres, are well aware, on our committee we have no margin for error or delay. We have no ability to turn down work in response to insufficient resources. We have no ability to calibrate our workload based on available funds.

When the House is considering legislation, the Rules Committee must be open for business. Preparing legislation for the floor comes with high fixed costs, costs that don't disappear when the resources get tight.

Many other committees may have weeks or months to prepare their work product. However, the Rules Committee's agenda is measured in days, hours, and minutes.

As a result of the committee's essential and unique role, we invest heavily in a custom automated workflow system, one that allows us to process thousands of amendments in a matter of days.

In the 117th Congress, the committee processed over 8,500 amendment submissions, an increase of 14 percent over the previous Congress. We expect to exceed that number perhaps by a significant amount in this Congress.

We are encouraged by the level of member and staff engagement in the legislative process so far this Congress and look forward to partnering with committees to move exceptional work product to the House floor in a deliberative process whereby all voices can be heard.

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 institution suffers.

Our committee's responsibility is the timely delivery of business to the floor, maintaining the Republican Conference's commitment to transparency and openness in the legislative process and the fair and efficient handling of member requests.

Due to the previous investments that your committee has allowed us to make, both in staff and technology, we believe we can rise to the challenges and opportunities that we will certainly confront in the next 2 years without an increase in funding.

As such, our budget request for the 118th Congress is a flat funding request of \$8,335,614, equally divided between each session.

Thanks for your consideration of our request. I am prepared to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cole follows:]

Statement of Chairman Tom Cole
Committee on House Administration Hearing: Committee Funding for the 118th Congress
February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the budget request for the Committee on Rules for the One Hundred and Eighteenth Congress. I appreciate the thoughtful and deliberate work you do to ensure that committees have the resources they need to fulfill our constitutional mandate.

Along with my partner on the committee, Ranking Member Jim McGovern, I respectfully request level funding for the One Hundred and Eighteenth Congress to carry out our institutional responsibilities on behalf of the American people. As my colleagues who have previously served on the Rules Committee, Ranking Member Morelle and Ms. Torres, are well aware, on our committee we have no margin for error or delay. We have no ability to turn down work in response to insufficient resources, we have no ability to calibrate our workload based on available funds.

When the House is considering legislation, the Rules Committee must be open for business. Preparing legislation for the floor comes with high fixed costs, costs that don't disappear when the resources get tight. Many other committees may have weeks and months to prepare their work product, however the Rules Committee's agenda is measured in days, hours, and minutes. As a result of the committee's essential and unique role, we invest heavily in a custom automated workflow system, one that allows us to process thousands of amendments in a matter of days.

In the One Hundred and Seventeenth Congress, the Committee processed over 8,500 amendment submissions, an increase of 14% over the previous Congress. We expect to exceed that number, perhaps by a significant amount, in this Congress. We are encouraged by the level of Member and staff engagement in the legislative process so far this Congress and look forward to partnering with committees to move exceptional work product to the House floor in a deliberative process whereby all voices can be heard.

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 institution suffers. Our committee's responsibility is the timely delivery of business to the floor, maintaining the Republican Conference's commitment to transparency and openness in the legislative process, and the fair and efficient handling of Member requests. Due to the previous investments that your committee has allowed us to make, both in staff and technology, we believe we can rise to the challenges, and opportunities, we will certainly confront in the next two years without an increase in funding. As such, our budget request for the One Hundred and Eighteenth Congress is flat funding of \$8,335,614, equally divided between each session.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and I'm pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Cole.
Ranking Member McGovern, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. MCGOVERN. Well, thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle and the members of the Committee on House Administration. I am pleased to be joining my good friend, Chairman Cole, in presenting our request for funding for the Committee on Rules for the 118th Congress.

Our committee, as Mr. Cole has pointed out, is unique. Our primary mission is not to write laws, nor conduct direct oversight, but rather to facilitate the work of all House committees and of the House itself. That means we don't typically hire experts on one specific policy. Our staff tracks every policy question that comes to the House floor and are seasoned experts on House procedures and precedents.

As Ranking Member Morelle and Congresswoman Torres know from personal experience, our work does not run on a schedule limited by business hours. We know late nights better than anyone else in these Halls.

Further, our workload has only grown in recent years. For example, as recently as the 114th Congress, our committee received under 4,000 amendment submissions for our consideration. Last Congress, we received over 8,500 submissions.

We take the responsibility of keeping this institution functioning very seriously, and I believe that we have succeeded in being a resource for all members and staff serving here.

A big part of that success has been our ability to hire and retain our extraordinary staff on both sides of the aisle—and let me emphasize the word “extraordinary.” We have also succeeded by keeping our disagreements where they belong—on matters of substance.

When it comes to the logistics of running the committee and working within the budget allocated to us, I could not ask for a better partner than my good friend from Oklahoma, Mr. Cole. Over the last two Congresses, we worked closely as Chair and Ranking Member, and I look forward to continuing that relationship with our roles reversed—although I liked the arrangement previously better, but anyway.

I am also grateful that Chairman Cole is continuing our committee's long tradition of providing the minority full control over one-third of the overall budget. I support the request of this committee from my Chairman that we be provided the same amount of funding for each of the next 2 years as we were provided for the last year.

These funds will allow us to continue supporting this institution, from its leadership to its committees to the staffs of every member office.

I thank you for your time and your attention, and I am happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McGovern follows:]

TOM COLE, OKLAHOMA
CHAIRMAN

MICHAEL BURGESS, TEXAS
GUY RESCHENTHALER, PENNSYLVANIA
MICHELLE FISCHBACH, MINNESOTA
THOMAS MASSIE, KENTUCKY
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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH
CONGRESS

JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
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Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
Ranking Member James P. McGovern
February 28, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee on House Administration. I'm pleased to be joining Chairman Cole today in presenting our request for funding for the Committee on Rules for the 118th Congress.

Our Committee is unique—our primary mission is not to write laws nor conduct direct oversight, but rather to facilitate the work of all other House committees and of the House itself. That means that we don't typically hire experts on one specific policy: our staff tracks every policy question that comes to the House floor and are seasoned experts on House procedures and precedents.

And as Ranking Member Morelle and Congresswoman Torres know from personal experience, our work does not run on a schedule limited by business hours: we know late nights better than anyone else in these halls. Further, our workload has only grown in recent years. For example, as recently as the 114th Congress, our Committee received under 4,000 amendment submissions for our consideration. Last Congress, we received over 8,500 submissions.

We take the responsibility of keeping this institution functioning very seriously and I believe that we have succeeded in being a resource for all members and staff serving here. A big part of that success has been our ability to hire and retain our extraordinary staff on both sides of the aisle.

We have also succeeded by keeping our disagreements where they belong: on matters of substance. When it comes to the logistics of running the committee and working within the budget allocated to us I could not ask for a better partner than my good friend from Oklahoma. Over the last two Congresses we worked closely as Chair and Ranking Member and I look forward to continuing that relationship with our roles reversed. I am also grateful that Chairman Cole is continuing our Committee's long tradition of providing the minority full control over one-third of our overall budget.

I support the request of this Committee from my Chairman: that we be provided the same amount of funding for each of the next two years as we were provided for last year. These funds will allow us to continue supporting this institution from its leadership to its committees to the staffs of every member office.

I thank each of you for your time and attention and am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank both very much.

The majority and the minority will now have a total of 5 minutes to ask the witnesses questions.

The majority will now yield to Mr. Murphy for the purpose of asking questions for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming today. I am just going to try to make this brief.

You guys are asking essentially for a 10 percent increase over last time. This is part of the committee process. Is that bad math?

Mr. COLE. Yes. Our request is a flat budget.

Mr. MURPHY. Flat budget for 2023, 2024. Then how can that be 10 percent over what was done in the 117th? Can somebody help with that?

Mr. MCGOVERN. Yes. I think we got a midsession increase in the 117th Congress. We are simply asking for a flat level as we go forward.

Mr. MURPHY. A flat level from the increase last time?

Mr. MCGOVERN. Yes.

Mr. COLE. That did not come at the beginning.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay, so my question is just because we are trying to save money and all this other stuff.

Last time you in the majority spent 83 percent of your funds, correct, is what I am seeing here?

Mr. MCGOVERN. Correct.

Mr. MURPHY. The minority spent 100 percent.

To what do you owe the increased need? What is going to be the increased need for this—

Mr. MCGOVERN. We are asking for the same amount as last year.

Mr. MURPHY. Alright. Well, I am looking at a different number then. So—

Mr. COLE. It was provided in 2022? So—

Mr. MURPHY. I am looking at 7.5 million last time and 8.3 million this time. Is that correct? Am I just looking at the wrong numbers? I am not arguing with you.

Mr. COLE. No. No.

Mr. MURPHY. I just wanted to know what the difference is going to be. What new adjustments are there?

Mr. COLE. There was a new committee funding resolution that was done in 2022. That was the budget we operated off in 2022. We are not asking for an increase for 2023 and 2024.

Mr. MURPHY. Alright. Got it. Got it. Got it.

Mr. COLE. Yes.

Mr. MURPHY. I don't have any issues. I think Rules, I think y'all run pretty lean and mean. You are not planning on having any field hearings in Alaska or anything like this. That is correct?

Mr. COLE. That is correct.

Mr. MURPHY. Alright.

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really don't have any considerations. I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I reserve the balance of my time.

I will now recognize Ranking Member Morelle for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Chairman Cole, Ranking Member McGovern, for being here.

I find myself in a rare disagreement with the Chair and Ranking Member. I was prepared to support a doubling of their allocation. Apparently they have asked for less than that.

I will admit, and I think Mrs. Torres would agree with me, that it is hard to imagine the amount of time and energy that the Rules Committee members put into this endeavor, all hours of day and night, often with less, perhaps, notice than we would like, and many hours sometimes waiting around for the committee to get going because we are just waiting on other things to happen here in the House. The staff is remarkable on both sides. Appreciate all of their work.

One of the only downsides to being on—the ranker on this committee is not serving on the Rules Committee any longer.

I really do appreciate the work that they do. They do it, both sides, with great civility, have worked incredibly hard to advance the interests of the American public. I know it sounds like an advertisement for the committee, but I am really grateful to you.

One question I have asked of each of the Chairs and Ranking Members—and I very much appreciate the fact that you have agreed on the allocation. Mr. Chairman, can you commit to just making sure that the minority has unrestricted access to their portion of the allocation that is given to the committee?

Mr. COLE. Absolutely. We certainly got that courtesy from then Chairman McGovern when I was there. We have tried to extend that back. We think that is important.

Honestly, we do have a terrific working relationship between the two staffs, as my friend knows, and they are candid with one another. They share back and forth with one another. They understand how difficult these jobs are and, honestly, I think have worked together extraordinarily well to facilitate things.

You know and Mrs. Torres knows as former members, we deal with some really controversial items. There is not a break. We are doing it every single week that we are in session.

I am really proud of the example my friend, the Ranking Member, set as Chairman in terms of maintaining—and my colleagues who are up on the dais—maintaining the really collegial and cooperative relationship between the two sides.

You have my firm commitment that my friend, the ranking member, has complete control over his one-third of the total allocation.

Mr. MORELLE. I appreciate that.

Anything further you would like to add, Mr. McGovern?

Mr. MCGOVERN. I agree with him.

Mr. MORELLE. Wow. I appreciate that.

Mr. COLE. I wish I heard that more in my own committee.

Mr. MORELLE. I would like to reserve just a moment or two and yield to my friend, Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. I just want to thank you both for coming to our committee, our new committee assignment here, and to say that, while I agree 100 percent with your budget, I am just very concerned about the staff time, the long hours that it seems to just continue to grow every year, the time that they spend working at the Capitol dealing with amendments and the late hours.

I don't know how to improve that, but I will leave that to both of you to figure out how to improve those working conditions for the staff.

Thank you. Yield back.

Mr. MORELLE. I yield back, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

Thank you both for being here and for all the great work you do.

The CHAIRMAN. Briefly, in the time that the majority has left, I just wanted to follow up with one question if I can with you, Chairman Cole.

One of the things that this committee has been looking at is kind of software solutions and whether or not there are any enterprise solutions. I know your committee has worked with a program called Core, I am not sure how familiar you are with this, in Dropbox. I know you have a significant number of documents that come in, often late at night.

Curious. Your request includes \$250,000 to make necessary updates and adjustments to the Core software. Could you just comment briefly as to the essential purpose of this software just so we get an understanding as we think through potential enterprise solutions?

Mr. COLE. Asking me for anything technological is probably—you have immediately moved me beyond my competence.

I will say this, it is just the sheer volume of work and the speed at which technology has changed that we have to be constantly able to adapt. Again, we are not asking for more money in the overall budget.

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Mr. COLE. We are just actually making efficiencies within our own budget and redirecting resources there so we can stay on top of the flow of paper.

The amendment requests are staggering. We don't expect that to slow down. We are happy. Look, that just means members are engaged, and they have got ideas, and they are bringing them forward on both sides. We are going to try to facilitate as much as we possibly can.

It does require to keep things moving, really top level technology that changes on a regular basis. We can't get ourselves ever into a situation where we are relying on technology that is 10 years old. That happens a lot in the Federal Government—or 20, or 30 years old. We have seen that before. We just simply won't be able to keep track of the paper and deliver the product in a way that allows the House to move in a timely fashion.

We figure we are the last stop before something goes to the floor. It needs to move at the pace that the body wants it to move at and make sure that we don't keep members sitting around waiting because we can't produce the work product quickly enough.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for that insight. We are always looking at ways to find enterprise solutions here in the House to improve efficiencies across all our committees.

I appreciate both of your testimony here today. I appreciate your openness to participate in our commitment to regular order and accountability.

Thank you very much. Have a wonderful day.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, thank you for coming to testify today before our hearing. This is our commitment to restoring regular order to the people's House and to improving accountability and transparency to the American people.

We will recognize each of you for 5 minutes for the purpose of an opening statement. The majority and minority will have a total of 5 minutes to ask questions.

I will now recognize Chairman Jim Jordan for the purpose of an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JIM JORDAN, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM THE STATE OF OHIO**

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, thank you for the invitation to testify today.

The Judiciary Committee has an important mission: protecting the fundamental civil liberties of American citizens.

We have all seen what has happened over the past several years. We have seen the First Amendment under attack from big tech and big government. Just read the Twitter Files. We have seen how the Justice Department and the FBI abuse their law enforcement authorities. We have seen how the open border policies of this administration have led to crime, drained local resources, and allowed drugs to flow into our country.

These are important and serious issues. They are the things the Judiciary Committee must examine. We expect to have an aggressive legislative and oversight agenda this Congress.

In addition, the House has created a new select subcommittee within the Judiciary Committee on the weaponization of the Federal Government.

To meet our immediate needs, we are respectfully asking for your consideration of a \$2 million annual increase to our budget. In addition, we respectfully ask for access to up to 15 million for the reserve fund to meet additional needs of the committee and the select subcommittee as necessary.

We have structured the request in this manner so that we have the resources we need, but to ensure we are also careful stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. I am happy to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jordan follows:]

Opening Statement of Chairman Jim Jordan
Before the Committee on House Administration
Judiciary Committee Primary Funding Resolution
February 28, 2023

- Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Morelle, thank you for the invitation to testify today.
- The Judiciary Committee has an important mission, which I see as this: protecting the fundamental civil liberties of American citizens.
- We've all seen what has happened over the past several years.
- We've seen the First Amendment under attack from Big Tech and Big Government. Don't take it from me—read the Twitter files.
- We've seen how the Justice Department and FBI abuse their law-enforcement authorities.
- We've seen how the radical open-border policies of the Biden Administration has led to crime, drained local resources, and allowed drugs to flow into our country.

- These are important and serious issues, and they are things the Judiciary Committee must examine.
- We expect to have an aggressive legislative and oversight agenda this Congress.
- In addition, the House has created a new select subcommittee within the Judiciary Committee: the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government.
- To meet our immediate needs, we are respectfully asking for your consideration of a \$2 million annual increase to our budget.
- In addition, we respectfully ask for access to up to \$15 million from the reserve fund to meet additional needs of the Committee and the Select Subcommittee as necessary.
- We've structured the request in this manner so that we have the resources we need but to ensure we are careful stewards of taxpayer dollars.
- Thank you for your consideration of our request. I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ranking Member Nadler, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JERROLD NADLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. NADLER. Thank you. Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the House Judiciary Committee's funding request for the 118th Congress.

The House Judiciary Committee has historically been one of the most active committees in the House. Our wide jurisdiction, ranging from antitrust, immigration, and constitutional law, to issues relating to criminal justice, civil rights, and the courts, places us at the forefront of many of the most pressing issues facing our country today.

In fact, last Congress, nearly 2,000 legislative measures were referred to the committee, representing more than 16 percent of all bills introduced in the House.

Under Democratic leadership, the Judiciary Committee held nearly 80 hearings, reported 83 bills and resolutions to the House, and had primary jurisdictional involvement in the passage of 110 bills and resolutions. Of these, we were able to enact 53 into law.

I hope that under the Republican majority the committee will continue to tackle difficult issues and solve problems with substantive hearings on meaningful legislation that moves to the House floor in a bipartisan manner.

So far, they have produced very little, but I remain hopeful.

With that in mind, I support the majority's request to increase funding for the 118th Congress. A funding increase will be critical to recruiting and hiring the staff we need to accomplish our important work and to providing them with the resources that they need to succeed.

With so many pressing issues before our country, this funding increase is critical to allow us to continue to deliver results for the American people.

I understand that the majority plans, after subtracting the amounts to cover administrative expenses and salaries for shared employees, to allocate two-thirds of the remaining funds to the majority and one-third for the minority to cover salaries. They also plan to maintain one shared employee for financial matters. This is in line with the committee's recent practice.

Having said that, I do have several concerns with the majority's request. Unfortunately, we were merely presented with a copy of their request roughly 4 hours before it was submitted, and they made no attempt to seek any input from the minority. Since Chairman Jordan did not solicit our views, I hope to share some of our objections with you.

First, we strongly object to the funding of "up to" 50 staff slots and "up to" \$15 million for new select committees. That is greater than the entire Judiciary Committee budget, for which they request a little more than \$11 million.

If they really propose a \$15 million subcommittee, they should say so. By asking for "up to" this amount, we have no idea of the real scope of the select subcommittee, which makes it impossible to

plan for. The budget after all is literally a plan to spend money. Apparently, they don't have one.

We have other concerns that we hoped we would have been able to share with them. Had they asked, we might have advised them that the numbers they used for administrative expenses are exorbitant, especially coming from someone like Chairman Jordan who prides himself on being a fiscal conservative.

I ask you to look carefully at the numbers in their presentation and you will be shocked, as I was, that they are asking for double, triple, and at times even 30 times more than was actually spent last year—30 times.

For example, their travel budget is \$260,000, up from \$8,000 last year. That is a thirtyfold increase. Their printing budget is up from just \$689 to \$20,000, a twentyfold increase. They propose to triple the amount of money spent on so-called "other services," and they want to double the amount spent on supplies. They want almost \$350,000 for equipment. Last year we managed just fine by spending only \$65,000.

Now, maybe they really did a careful cost estimate and came up with these numbers. Unlikely, but maybe they did.

Why do I bother mentioning it here? The answer is because all of this administrative funding comes first, before they divide up the salaries. Therefore, it shrinks the amount of money going to the minority to pay for personnel.

Was this on purpose? Probably not, but it does have a significant impact on the minority, especially if that money, as I suspect, is never actually spent on the items that they say they plan to spend it on. Perhaps they could learn from our example and run a more efficient operation.

If we have a cooperative arrangement between the Chairman and Ranking Member, then I am comfortable sharing administrative expenses. If the expenses are equally shared and if the majority supports the minority's efforts to use the funds as it sees fit, then it is Okay to share.

For example, if the Republicans don't want to pay for a HOPS system to track time off and we do, then we do not get to spend those funds.

What if they don't want to pay for news sources that they don't agree with and what if they don't want to pay for computers or cell phones?

Recently, they rejected spending requests on the personnel side of the budget as well. In response to question three on your questionnaire, they indicated there were no restrictions on how the minority was allowed to utilize its personnel funds last Congress. In response to question four, they indicated that the committee would allocate funds to the minority in the same manner as in the 117th Congress. And yet they have rejected personnel decisions by the minority already this year.

They have indeed placed restrictions on how we spend the money. They have argued that we would not be able to spend more than one-twelfth the annual personnel budget in any given month. We believe this type of restriction is unprecedented.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is requested to conclude his remarks.

Mr. NADLER. We would argue that so long as we have not gone over the total budget for the year, they ought to allow us to spend these funds as we see fit just as we did when we were in the majority. Right now, we have no recourse if they reject our request for expenses, even if our requests are rejected on a seemingly arbitrary basis.

If that is the case, we do have a problem with the division of funds. If the division of funds is meant to enhance efficiencies by purchasing prescriptions in bulk, for example, that is fine. If it is used as a tool by the majority to deny funds and resources to the minority, that is not a fair division of funds.

The bottom line——

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nadler follows:]

Statement of the Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee, before the Committee on House Administration's Hearing on "Committee Funding for the 118th Congress"

February 28, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the House Judiciary Committee's funding request for the 118th Congress.

The House Judiciary Committee has historically been one of the most active committees in the House. Our wide jurisdiction—ranging from antitrust, immigration, and constitutional law, to issues relating to criminal justice, civil rights, and the courts—places us at the forefront of many of the most pressing issues facing our country today.

In fact, last Congress nearly 2,000 legislative measures were referred to the Committee, representing more than 16% of all bills introduced in the House. Under Democratic leadership, the Judiciary Committee held nearly 80 hearings, reported 83 bills and resolutions to the House, and had primary jurisdictional involvement in the passage of 110 bills and resolutions. Of these, we were able to enact 53 bills into law.

I hope that under the Republican Majority the Committee will continue to tackle difficult issues and solve problems with substantive hearings on meaningful legislation that moves to the House Floor in a bipartisan manner. So far, they have produced very little, but I remain hopeful.

With that in mind, I support the Majority's request to increase funding for the 118th Congress. A funding increase will be critical to recruiting and hiring the staff we need to accomplish our important work, and to providing them with the resources they need to succeed. With so many pressing issues before our country, this funding increase is critical to allow us to continue to deliver results for the American people.

I understand that the Majority plans—after subtracting amounts to cover administrative expenses and salaries for shared employees—to allocate 2/3rds of the remaining funds to the Majority and 1/3rd to the Minority, to cover salaries. They also plan to maintain one shared employee for financial matters. This is in line with the Committee's recent practice.

Having said that, I do have several concerns with the Majority's request. Unfortunately, we were merely presented with a copy of their request roughly four hours before it was submitted, and they made no attempt to seek *any* input from the Minority. Since Chairman Jordan did not solicit our views, I hope to share some of our objections with you.

First, we strongly object to the funding of "**UP TO**" 50 staff slots and "**UP TO**" \$15 million for a new Select Subcommittee—that is greater than the *entire* Judiciary Committee budget, for which they request a little more than \$11 million.

If they really propose a \$15 million Subcommittee they should say so, but by asking for “**UP TO**” this amount, we have no idea of the real scope of this Select Subcommittee, which makes it impossible to plan for. And a budget, after all, is literally a plan to spend money. Apparently, they don’t have one.

We have other concerns that we hoped we would have been able to share with them. Had they asked, we might have advised them that the numbers they use for administrative expenses are exorbitant, especially coming from someone like Chairman Jordan who prides himself on being a fiscal conservative.

I ask you to look carefully at the numbers in their presentation and you will be shocked—as I was—that they are asking for double, triple, and, at times, even *30 times* more than what was actually spent last year.

For example, their travel budget is \$262,000—up from \$8,000 last year. That is a 30-fold increase. Their printing budget is up from just \$689 to \$20,000—a twenty-fold increase. They propose to triple the amount of money spent on so-called “other services” and they want to double the amount spent on supplies. They want almost \$350,000 for equipment. Last year we managed just fine by spending only \$65,000.

Now, maybe they really did a careful cost estimate and came up with these numbers. Unlikely, but maybe they did. Why do I bother mentioning it here? The answer is because all this administrative funding comes first—before they divide up the salaries. Therefore, it shrinks the amount of money going to the Minority to pay for personnel.

Was this on purpose? Probably not. But it does have a significant negative impact on the Minority—especially if that money, as I suspect, is never actually spent on the items that they say they plan to spend it on. Perhaps they could learn from our example and run a more efficient operation.

If we have a cooperative arrangement between the Chairman and Ranking member, then I am comfortable sharing administrative expenses. If the expenses are equally shared, and if the Majority supports the Minority’s efforts to use the funds as it sees fit, then it is ok to share. But, for example if the Republicans don’t want to pay for a HOPS system to track time off and we do, then we do not get to spend those funds. And what if they don’t want to pay for news sources they don’t agree with? And what if they don’t want to pay for computers or cell phones?

Recently, they rejected spending requests on the personnel side of the budget as well. In response to Question 3 in your questionnaire, they indicated that there were no restrictions on how the minority was allowed to utilize its personnel funds last Congress. And in response to Question 4, they indicated that the Committee would allocate funds to the minority in the same manner as in the 117th Congress. And yet, they have rejected personnel decisions by the Minority already this year. They have indeed placed restrictions on how we spend the money. They have argued that we would not be able to spend more than 1/12 the annual personnel budget in any given month. We believe this type of restriction is unprecedented. We would argue that so long

as we have not gone over the total budget for the year, they ought to allow us to spend those funds as we see fit – just as we did when we were in the majority.

Right now, we have no recourse if they reject our requests for expenses, even if our requests are rejected on a seemingly arbitrary basis. If that is the case, we do have a problem with the division of funds. If the division of funds is meant to enhance efficiencies by purchasing subscriptions in bulk, for example, that is fine. If it is used as a tool by the Majority to deny funds and resources to the Minority, then it is not a fair division of the funds.

The bottom line is that if we have a relationship where we are often not consulted and where our reasonable requests are denied—which has been the case so far—then we are less supportive of the plan to isolate the administrative expenses, and we would like to consider the idea of a more equal division of the administrative resources.

When a long-standing norm has been broken, then it is time to consider changing the practice. And we might be at that point now, unless the Chairman can promise all of us here today that he will not deny our requests to use administrative funds the way we want.

One more point about how the lack of consultation leads to unnecessary mistakes. In response to your excellent questionnaire, the Republicans said that they would provide \$2.9 million to the Minority for salaries. But they are asking for over \$10 million for salaries overall.

If we are supposed to get 1/3 of the salary money, as they profess, that number should be \$3.4 million, not the \$2.9 million that they indicate. That would have been very simple to correct had we been given the opportunity to carefully review the request in advance.

Similarly, in response to Question 7, they completely mischaracterized our budget from last Congress. They stated that we “had difficulty filling many of [our] positions due to the anticipated change in House leadership.” In fact, we purposely chose to be lean going into the midterms because we thought this was the most responsible and prudent approach, and we were still extremely effective.

It is very disappointing that they would make assertions that are not based in fact—especially when we could have easily corrected the record if they had given us the courtesy of meaningful consultation before submitting their report.

While I strongly agree with the Majority’s request for additional funding overall, I hope this committee will examine their request carefully and ensure that those funds are allocated in a responsible manner, with an emphasis on providing sufficient funds to hire the personnel we all rely on to do our jobs for the American people.

I hope it isn’t true for the sake of the institution, but if we assume the worst, it looks like Chairman Jordan may be using his budget in an unprecedented way as a weapon to harm minority basic functioning.

Thank you, and I look forward to taking your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. We are going to make sure we get through everyone's testimony here today. I don't want to cut you too short, but I did give you—I allowed you an extra minute.

I would remind my colleagues that last year, under the Democratic majority, this House spent \$18.3 million on the select committee on January 6th with very limited oversight by this body without Republicans appointed to that committee by our then minority leader, now Speaker of the House, Kevin McCarthy.

Mr. NADLER. I would remind the Chairman that the minority—

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is not recognized.

Mr. NADLER. You want to cutoff speech, that is Okay.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman was given his full 5 minutes and was graciously extended an additional 1 minute past that time. The gentleman is allowed to provide extended remarks in the written record through the duration of today if you would like to submit additional remarks.

The majority and minority will both be allowed 5 minutes for questioning the witnesses. I will now yield from the majority's time to Ms. Laurel Lee for the purpose of asking the witnesses questions.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Jordan, I would like to begin with the select subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, which has been added to the Judiciary Committee's responsibilities this year.

Would you share for us what additional resources are needed in order for the select subcommittee to conduct its essential oversight and investigative work?

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. I appreciate the question.

We think potentially a lot of additional resources. That is why we asked for the reserve fund.

I mean, never forget we have an FBI that targeted moms and dads for showing up at school board meetings, an FBI that we learned a couple weeks ago in the Richmond Field Office said if you are a traditional Catholic, they are going to treat you as a domestic terrorist.

We had a Department of Homeland Security attempt in this administration to set up a Disinformation Governance Board as if some Federal agency can tell you what is appropriate speech and what is not appropriate speech.

Mr. Nadler just talked about free speech. I mean, you have got to be kidding me. That is the biggest attack I have ever seen, frankly, on the First Amendment.

Of course, we now have the ATF, which has rewritten a rule without any input from the Congress that could potentially make millions of law-abiding citizens felons for exercising their Second Amendment liberties.

That is just a quick sampling. That is why we think that a substantial reserve fund is so necessary.

Ms. LEE. Chairman Jordan, mention was made of the travel budget and field hearings. The Judiciary Committee just returned from a field hearing to the border. Is that right?

Mr. JORDAN. Sure did.

Ms. LEE. Could you tell us, please, why it is that you believe it is important for the Judiciary Committee to have the opportunity to conduct such hearings out in the field?

Mr. JORDAN. Because 5 million illegal migrants have entered this country in the last 23 months. If that doesn't warrant having a travel budget.

There is a reason why the Homeland Security went to the border in the last 2 weeks, the Speaker of the House went to the border in the last few weeks, the Judiciary Committee went to the border in the last few weeks, minus Democrats who refused to show up, and there is also the Energy and Commerce Committee went to the border, because it is such a substantial problem, not only to the communities on the border.

We heard from the folks in Yuma. We heard from the hospital administrator in Yuma who said that there were residents, American citizens in his community, who had to go somewhere else, couldn't go to the maternity ward because it was full. I mean, they were helping migrants who were delivering children. You know, God bless them. Of course they are going to do that. But citizens there had to travel to Phoenix or San Diego or somewhere else to deliver a child.

That is the kind of impact it is having on the border and of course we are beginning to see this across the country.

That is why we thought it is important to have a travel budget as we deal with this immigration border crisis that we have seen now, again, for 2 years.

Ms. LEE. Chairman Jordan, what restrictions were placed on Republican members and staff of the committee during the 117th Congress, especially when it came to conducting official travel?

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. We were limited. Republican staff were limited to traveling to the border in 2021. Also, I would point out I don't know that we had even—we had to go I think a year before we even had—over a year before we even had Secretary Mayorkas in front of the Judiciary Committee, which, as you all know, has primary jurisdiction over immigration legislation and immigration enforcement.

We want to change that. That is part of why we are doing and asking for the budget requests that we are asking for.

Ms. LEE. You mentioned in your initial remarks that you had proposed a budget "up to" certain amounts in a couple places. Would you tell us why you have chosen to do that instead of setting them at the highest amount that you think might be required?

Mr. JORDAN. Well, because, as I said in my opening statement, because we are the U.S. Congress. We are supposed to be stewards of the American people's money, good stewards, and we felt, look, we are going to need resources to get to the bottom of everything that is going on.

The idea that you had the Federal Government telling big tech companies, literally emails to big tech companies saying we think you should take down these posts and look at these accounts, as Professor Turley said, you had censorship by surrogate, that is frightening.

It is going to take resources, staff, and people to get to the bottom of all the things that are going on where the government we

think has in many ways been turned against the very people it is supposed to represent and supposed to serve.

At the same time, we didn't want to come in and just have that money. We said we will draw down as is needed to do the good work that the Congress said should happen in this select committee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Chairman Jordan.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I reserve the balance of our time.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes for the purpose of asking questions.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Chairman Jordan and Ranking Member Nadler, for being here.

I think I would just express personally my disappointment that I think, of all the standing committees that are coming before us, this is the only committee that hasn't been able to arrive at an agreement on the expenditure of dollars. We clearly would hope that would be the case going forward.

In the last Congress, in the Judiciary Committee, under Chairman Nadler's leadership, he mentioned some of the things. The committee was very busy, passed more than a hundred bills on the House floor, held more than 80 hearings, marked up nearly 100 bills in committee.

Over the 4 years, again under Chairman Nadler's leadership and his predecessor, the Judiciary Committee ensured that survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment are free to tell their stories and seek justice in Federal courts, reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, codified lynching as a Federal crime in Federal law, addressed the State of hate crimes against Asian Americans and others in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, enacted the first significant gun safety legislation in a generation, enacted measured to strengthen the antitrust system. In addition, a Judiciary Committee bill enshrined marriage equality into Federal law.

It was an ambitious agenda with a series of accomplishments with less money than is being proposed to spend in this Congress.

Let me just begin.

Chairman Jordan, would you anticipate marking up a hundred bills in the committee in this Congress? Is that your goal.

Mr. JORDAN. I don't necessarily think the American people want us to pass a whole lot more laws. What I think they want us to do is deal with the border situation and deal with the government that I think so many Americans think has been turned against them in many ways. That is where we are going to focus. We do anticipate passing immigration enforcement legislation out of the committee in the very near future.

Mr. MORELLE. I understand that you may not be interested in marking up or passing as many bills as happened in the previous Congresses.

Is the resource that you have asked for, particularly the increase, are those resources going to be devoted toward investigations primarily, transcribed interviews, document requests? Is that the nature of what you see the spend will be?

Mr. JORDAN. The resources will be for the committee's work. I do anticipate a lot of the committee's work is going to be in the area you just described.

Mr. MORELLE. Of the what? I am sorry. I didn't hear you.

Mr. JORDAN. In the area you just described, doing the constitutional oversight duty and function that we have as members of Congress to stop the behavior we have seen from so many of these Federal agencies.

Frankly, to propose legislation. It is our job to propose legislation that would help remedy the situation.

Mr. MORELLE. Obviously from our committee's perspective and from my role here, is to try to ensure that the minority in each of the various committees has access to the resources they need to do their work.

I want to ask whether you would make sure that you pledge that the minority has not only the resources they need to do their work, but also unimpeded access to the resources once they are allocated.

Mr. JORDAN. We believe our budget plan does that.

Mr. MORELLE. I am sorry?

Mr. JORDAN. We believe that our budget plan does that and is consistent with the way we had to operate in the last Congress.

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Ranking Member, Mr. Nadler, how do you feel about that? Do you feel you will have unimpeded access to the resources from the committee?

Mr. NADLER. No. We have already been blocked. They are enforcing a rule which has never been enforced before, which is to say that you get an amount of money, and one-twelfth of that must be spent in each month. You can't—you can't budget that way.

We have already been told—some of the people we want to hire, we can't hire yet. Already harmed us. We have never done this before. Committee, the minority, the majority gets a budget. The majority is supposed to get—I am sorry. The minority is supposed to get one-third after administrative expenses, but we have never had a month-by-month limit.

I also—let me just also point out, in reference to what the chairman said a few minutes ago, we did allow staff and the ranking member to use funds to travel to the border last year, or in last Congress, I should say, when I was the Chairman. We also went to El Paso after the mass shooting, invited all the Republicans to come. They chose not to.

Mr. MORELLE. I want to be careful about my time, so there are a number of other questions I have.

Clearly, I want to make sure there is a split of resources, even on the Subcommittee on Weaponization, et cetera, which I don't know that has been agreed to, but want to keep a close eye on this and continue to make sure there is accountability here.

With that, I will yield back, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Next week, we will be marking up these committee requests, but I will say, Chairman Jordan, you have a huge task in front of you as it relates to protecting the freedoms and liberties of Americans, as it is addressing the border crisis and the immigration crisis that has played out under this Democratic President. I know you have a request to increase your funding, but it pales in comparison to

the \$18 million that was spent by the Democratic majority last Congress in a partisan move on the select committee on January 6.

We will take all that under advisement next week. We appreciate you both being here, part of our commitment to return to regular order and to be transparent to the American taxpayers.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Scott, thank you both for being here today to testify at our hearing on committee funding.

Today's hearing is our commitment to returning to regular order in this institution, as well as providing transparency to the American people.

You will both be recognized for 5 minutes for opening statements. Then the majority and minority on this committee will have 5 minutes in total each to ask questions.

I will now recognize the Chairwoman of the committee, Dr. Foxx.

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

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

While we were waiting, I cut out some of my remarks but will submit the full text of them for the record if you don't mind.

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear with my colleague, Ranking Member Scott, to testify about our budget request for the 118th Congress.

The work of the Committee on Education and Workforce is broad. From education and employment to healthcare and retirement, our work affects every aspect of people's lives. That is why the work we do here is so important.

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 7-percent budget increase for the first session of the 118th Congress and an additional 6 percent increase for the second session of the 118th Congress.

The pandemic gave us a window into just how broken our entire education system is. I know everyone here cares deeply about giving our Nation's students the best chance of success. Working together this Congress, we can truly improve the education system and give all students the opportunities they deserve.

We will look for real solutions that help borrowers and protect taxpayers to address the student—the broken student loan system. We will also strengthen our workforce development programs so we can close our Nation's skills gap and prepare the next generation of workers for our evolving economy.

As healthcare continues to be a huge expense for Americans, we will focus on strengthening and expanding access to employer-sponsored health insurance. The committee will also conduct vigorous oversight ensuring the Federal bureaucracy administers laws responsibly and as Congress intended. The executive branch has got-

ten too comfortable bypassing the legislative process set up by the Constitution.

As the people's Representatives, we should all be willing to guard the authority granted to us by the Constitution, regardless of which party is in the Oval Office. As I have said many times, my middle initial "A" no longer stands for Ann, but, rather, for accountability. Everything we do will focus on holding the Federal Government bureaucrats accountable for how they spend taxpayers' hard-earned money.

In order to execute the committee's robust legislative and oversight workload, the committee must be properly staffed. We need to recruit, hire, and retain staff in order to enhance the committee's institutional knowledge and productivity.

To enhance the committee's legislative and oversight efforts, we will pursue a strong schedule of hearings in Washington, DC, regional field hearings, and relevant site visits to hear directly from affected parties and see firsthand the challenges facing our schools and workplaces. 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 sent us to do. We respectfully ask the committee take these factors into account as you consider our budget request.

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

[The prepared 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 118th Congress”
February 28, 2023**

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear with my colleague, Ranking Member Scott, to testify about our budget request for the 118th 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 is broad—from education and employment to health care and retirement, our work affects every aspect of people’s lives. That’s why the work we do here is so important. 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 seven percent budget increase for the first session of the 118th Congress and an additional six percent increase for the second session of the 118th Congress. The request will provide the Committee with the resources needed to address the poor state of education at all levels and protect Americans’ ability to thrive in the 21st century workforce, while ensuring the policies and programs under the Committee’s jurisdiction operated effectively and efficiently.

The Committee will help advance a number of extensive legislative priorities this Congress. The pandemic gave us a window into just how broken our entire education system is. I know everyone here cares deeply about giving our nation’s students the best chance at success. Working together this Congress, we can truly improve the education system and give all students the opportunities they deserve. We will look for real solutions that help borrowers and protect taxpayers to address the broken student loan system.

Across every industry, we are seeing there is a workforce shortage. We will also strengthen our workforce development programs so we can close our nation’s skills gap and prepare the next generation of workers for our evolving economy.

As healthcare continues to be a huge expense for Americans, we will focus on strengthening and expanding access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

The Committee also will conduct vigorous oversight, ensuring the federal bureaucracy administers laws responsibly and as Congress intended. The executive branch has gotten too comfortable bypassing the legislative process set up by the Constitution. As the people’s representatives, we should all be willing to guard the authority granted to us by the Constitution, regardless of which party is in the Oval Office.

A I have said many times, my middle initial A no longer stands for Ann, but rather accountability. Everything we do will focus on holding the federal government bureaucrats accountable for how they spend taxpayers' hard-earned money.

In order to execute the Committee's robust legislative and oversight workload the Committee must be properly staffed. We need to recruit, hire, and retain staff in order to enhance the Committee's institutional knowledge and productivity. Many of these new staffers will need to have previous legislative or oversight experience and the committee must be able to compete in the marketplace for such robust talent.

To enhance the Committee's legislative and oversight efforts, we will pursue a strong 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.

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 sent 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 would be happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Foxx. Ranking Member Scott, you are now recognized.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Thank you, and good afternoon, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle. Good to see my colleague from Virginia and the gentlelady from California. It is—thank you for the opportunity to speak before you as ranking member with Chairwoman Foxx to speak in support of our bipartisan budget for the House Education and Workforce Committee.

I also want to thank Chairwoman Foxx for developing our committee budget and for—and to support the request for the 118th Congress, which represents no more than a 7-percent increase over the last Congress.

Although I believe our committee deserves more than a 7-percent increase, I do think it is at least sufficient enough of an increase to carry out our committee's legislative and oversight responsibilities. Moreover, Dr. Foxx and I want to continue to be role models for our colleagues and work in a productive bipartisan manner so that we can continue to disagree without being disagreeable.

For the past practice, one-third of the budget would be allocated to the minority. It has been our practice in the committee to provide the minority with autonomy over its budget allocation. I look forward to Chairwoman Foxx continuing to honor this committee's tradition.

Moreover, the budget allocation would allow the minority to continue its work with the highest level of professionalism and expertise. As you know, the committee has jurisdiction over matters that impact all walks of life—children, students, workers, older Americans—and as such, it is imperative that we attract and develop and retain a diverse, highly talented, and credentialed staff who can develop evidence-based policy initiatives to improve the lives of the American people.

During the 117th Congress, this robust staff worked to present 60 committee hearings, report out 25 bills of the committee, pass 23 bills through the House, and had ultimately 7 bills signed by the President.

We had many other of our proposals adopted in larger bills, such as the American Rescue Act Plan and others. Simply put, when Americans were struggling, the committee and staff delivered. As a result, we added more jobs into the economy in 2 years than any previous administration had added in 4, including 100 percent recovery of the jobs lost during the pandemic. We saved the pensions of over 1 million workers in the multi-employee pension fund and, at the same time, protected hundreds of businesses from closing.

We delivered the largest one-time Federal investment in K–12 education in U.S. history and brought the number of Americans without health insurance down to the lowest percentage ever.

Moving forward, in the minority, the committee Democrats and our staff will not rest. We pledge to work with Dr. Foxx in areas where we find commonality, and we have already identified areas, such as workforce development, juvenile justice, protecting con-

sumers from surprise billing, and hopefully there will be others. We will also press for the protection of the right of workers to organize, earn a livable wage that honors the dignity of their work and a safe workplace environment free of harassment and discrimination.

We will also continue to promote equity in education so that students can learn in a safe, welcoming environment and students can access and afford an education that will prepare them for the modern economy. We will promote food security policies and expansion of affordable healthcare.

In sum, the minority on the Education and Workforce Committee remains committed to our legislative responsibility to put people over politics. I join Chairwoman Foxx in asking the House Administration Committee to support our request, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I will be happy to answer questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Scott of Virginia follows:]



REMARKS

House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Remarks for Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)

House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Testifying before the House Administration Committee
1309 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 | 12:20PM

Good afternoon, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, as Ranking Member, with Chairwoman Foxx to speak in support of our bipartisan budget for the House Education and the Workforce.

I also want to thank Chairwoman Foxx for developing our Committee budget and support the request for the 118th Congress which represents no more than a seven percent increase over the last Congress. Although I believe our Committee deserves more than a seven percent increase, I think it is at least a sufficient enough increase to still carry out the Committee's legislative and oversight responsibilities. Moreover, Dr. Foxx and I want to continue to be a role model for our colleagues, and work in a productive, bipartisan manner. In short, we can disagree without being disagreeable.

Per the past practice, one-third of the budget will be allocated to the Minority. It has been the practice of the Committee to provide the Minority the autonomy over its budget allocation. I look forward to Chairwoman Foxx continuing to honor this Committee's tradition.

Moreover, the budget allocation will allow the Minority to continue its work with the highest level of professionalism and expertise. As you know, the Committee has jurisdiction over matters that impact all walks of life –children, students, workers and older Americans. As such, it is imperative that we attract, develop and retain a diverse, highly talented and credentialed staff who can develop evidence-based policy to improve the lives of the American people.

During the 117th Congress, this robust staff worked to present 60 Committee hearings, report out 25 bills from the Committee, pass 23 bills through the House, and had ultimately seven bills signed by the President. Simply put, when Americans were struggling, the Committee and staff delivered. As a result, we

- Added over 10.5 million jobs to the economy;
- Recovered 100 percent of the jobs lost during the pandemic;
- Saved the pensions of over one million workers and protect hundreds of businesses from closing;
- Delivered the largest, one-time federal investment in K-12 education in U.S. history; and,
- Brought the number of Americans without health insurance down to the lowest level ever.

Moving forward in the Minority, Committee Democrats and my staff will not rest. We pledge to work with Dr. Foxx to find areas of commonality – specifically in the area of workforce development, juvenile justice, protecting consumers from surprising billing, and hopefully many other areas.

We will also press for the protection of the right of workers to organize, earn livable wages that honors the dignity of their work in a safe workplace environment free of harassment and discrimination.

We will continue to promote equity in education so that students learn in a safe, welcoming environment; and, students can access and afford an education that will prepare them for the modern economy.

And, we will promote food security policies and the expansion of affordable health care.

In sum, the Minority on Education and the Workforce remains committed to our legislative responsibility to put people over politics.

I join Chairwoman Foxx in asking the House Administration Committee to support our request. I thank you for the opportunity to testify and am happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Scott. Appreciate both of you being here.

The majority and minority will now each have 5 minutes to ask questions of the witness. I will start with myself.

Chairwoman Foxx, you have a robust travel plan. I think that is really important to go out and hear from the American people. Could you just provide a few additional details of what you look to obtain while being outside of Washington, DC.?

Ms. FOXX. Well, we hope to obtain what I think each member hopes to obtain every time we go out into our district and talk to people. We want to hear from the people being affected by the policies that are passed by the Congress of the United States and how they are affecting them and to receive suggestions on how we can do things better. It is an opportunity to hear from the public—not talk to them but listen to them.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I am going to dive—shift gears slightly and kind of go into the mundane here for a second because I know you correctly said you have a reputation for being frugal, and I think this House has an opportunity to be a little more frugal writ large.

Inside of your funding request, there is \$160,000 each session for the cost of subscriptions and publications. One of the things that we are looking at this committee is, are there campuswide solutions to bring the costs down so that all of our committees aren't signing up for different subscriptions at different prices?

Could you maybe just comment on that? Is there anything in particular that would be helpful if we had a campuswide or Housewide solution that would allow us to bring costs down?

Ms. FOXX. Yes. There are several of the subscriptions that we know are very expensive, and we applaud your looking at the opportunity to get those campuswide, as you said. I think it is—one of the law pieces that I can't remember—it has gone out of my head right now—that is very, very expensive. Political Pro, there are several like that are very, very expensive.

We need those for—CQ, Westlaw—that was the one I was trying to think of. Westlaw is very expensive. Anything that you could do to make these available to everyone instead of everybody having to get their own subscription would be terrific.

The CHAIRMAN. Alright. I appreciate your feedback on that. That is something that I think we are going to have the opportunity to look into to save taxpayers money by looking for some of these solutions rather than—

Ms. FOXX. We, for example, did not continue to subscribe to National Journal in our office when it got so expensive. I enjoy reading it. I learn from it, but it just wasn't worth the cost.

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely. Understood.

I will reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Chairman Foxx, for being here, and Ranking Member Scott. I had the good fortune to serve for nearly 4 years on the committee, and I have great appreciation for the work that you both do and the members as well as the members of your staff, who I know work incredibly hard.

I wanted to—first, I am grateful for the fact that you have come together around distribution of resources, and, as I have asked each chair and ranking member, first, just about the unrestricted access to the resources for the minority, would you commit to allowing them, without impeding their ability, to hire within their budget allocation?

Ms. FOXX. Absolutely. That—as Ranking Member Scott has said, that has been the tradition, and I will fulfill that again.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes. Very good. Appreciate that.

Mr. Scott, are you confident in the relationship that you will have access to resources that you need?

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Yes.

Mr. MORELLE. The one thing I do want to know—and I appreciate the committee's emphasis on field hearings and appreciate your anticipated travel plans for the 118th Congress. I had asked earlier for a couple of other Chairs, relative to the process that has been established with coordination between a number of different offices—Sergeant at Arms, Capitol Police, the Clerk's Office around court reporters, the Chief Administrative Office around broadcasting and live-streaming—that system seems, by all accounts, to have saved time and money during field hearings that have been done in the past.

Will you continue to utilize that system that we have used in previous Congresses?

Ms. FOXX. Absolutely.

Mr. MORELLE. Okay.

Ms. Torres? Okay. Very good.

Thank you. Appreciate all the work you do. Appreciate you both being here, and, with that—

Ms. FOXX. It is nice to see you, Mr. Morelle and Ms. Torres, again. She is now not on Rules, I know, so I will miss seeing her.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, we welcome you—

Ms. FOXX. You, too.

Mr. MORELLE [continuing]. to come back here anytime. We appreciate seeing you here, and thanks for all your good work.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate both of you testifying here today. We will be marking up the full report next week. Your insights were helpful, and I appreciate you being part of our commitment to regular order and restoring transparency to the American people.

Thank you very much.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. We miss the gentleman from New York on the committee. He was a great member.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Turner and Ranking Member Himes, appreciate you being early. We are running ahead of schedule, so Mr. Himes is not late; he is early by 4 minutes. We appreciate you working with us here.

Today is a hearing as part of our commitment to regular order and transparency to the American people. We will allow each of you 5 minutes for the purpose of opening statements, and then the majority and the minority will have a total of 5 minutes each to ask each of you questions.

I will now recognize you, Mr. Turner, for the purpose of an opening statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO**

Mr. TURNER. Great. Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle.

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of budget request of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for 118th Congress. I am joined by my Ranking Member, Congressman Jim Himes.

In recent years, the Intelligence Committee has been distracted by partisan politics, but at HPSCI's organizational meeting earlier this year, the committee was addressed by Speaker McCarthy and Minority Leader Jeffries to deliver, in unison, one directive: Return the committee's work exclusively toward national security and oversight of the intelligence community and to do so in a bipartisan manner. Ranking Member Himes and I have accepted this charge, and we have echoed those expectations with the membership of the committee.

To accomplish our requirements, we are requesting 17.2 million for the 118th Congress, including 8.2 million for the first session, and 9 million for the second. The request represents a 13.9-percent increase in 2023, an additional increase of 10 percent over that for 2024.

If supported, the request will fund HPSCI's payroll operations and investments in information technology, IT, which are unique to our committee and are long overdue. With these moneys, the House of Representatives is investing in a renewed Intelligence Committee that will not only conduct oversight and legislative responsibilities but will offer significantly improved support to the standing committees of the House.

This is an initiative driven by the Speaker's desire to ensure that the legislative activities of the House are fully informed, including, when appropriate, by classified intelligence information. Just to underscore that, our committee is now open, and we are working diligently to provide intelligence information to the jurisdictional committees of the House.

In presenting HPSCI's budget, I want to provide you some context related to the challenges we face as we meet today. The United States faces unprecedented strategic threats from adversaries, including China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. Our adversaries are investing heavily in modernized capabilities and have become increasingly aggressive. They are testing our resolve, pushing the boundaries of international norms, and using all elements of their national power to divide and dominate. HPSCI has a duty to understand these threats.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, timely indications and warnings are critical to sound defense and foreign policy. Despite the enormous potential of open-source information, the vast majority of what we need to defend ourselves must be gained through clandestine and covert means.

In addition, it is the Intelligence Committee's responsibility, the reason of its founding in 1977, to guard the American people from

abuse originating from our Nation's spy agency. Since our founding, we have enacted laws to prevent intelligence agencies from targeting Americans, but these laws and the IC's compliance require intensive oversight.

Mr. Chairman, HPSCI will become a better resource for the House. As you know, an essential aspect of our work is that it must be done behind closed doors, in a SCIF, and with strict security controls. Tight security is needed because HPSCI maintains information related to the Nation's most sensitive classified activities, activities that risk lives and come at great cost.

At the same time, strident security and compartmentalization from the rest of the House has limited our ability to serve the institution. I am confident that we can do a better job in this. We have already demonstrated the value proposition of our new rules, updated earlier this month, with shared intelligence to the various committees.

Regarding the substance of our budget request, first, funding requests will enable the recruitment and retention of highly trained staff. Our staff all must have security clearance, which of course increases costs. Also, our funding request reflects HPSCI's information technology needs. We are unique to the House. Due to the classified nature of our work, members and staff can only perform their work in the committee's offices, which is a secure compartmentalized information facility, or SCIF.

In recognition of the escalated counterintelligence threats to our operations, HPSCI undertakes additional security-related steps, including the maintenance of a separate enclave and firewall within the House network. Additionally, devices in the committee spaces often require modification for use in a SCIF.

The committee operates an internal classified network that is maintained exclusively by HPSCI, on which the bulk of our oversight activities are conducted. Network reliability and security is critical. Also, to accomplish our objectives, we must seek contractual support from information security system professionals with appropriate security clearances. Also, we maintain an airgap system and a completely separate—a computerized system which is unique within the House.

The committee requests additional funding for its base information technology budget in order to support a Department of Defense and intelligence community approved supply chain security program for network equipment. I cannot overstate the importance of this work.

In short, I want to say we are the new Intelligence Committee. We are going to be doing more things, and we have additional members to our committee, including having added committees of jurisdiction with opportunities to sit within our committee structure itself. We need to update our security systems, our information systems, and to be able to serve our members and our committees.

I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Turner follows:]

**HOUSE ADMINISTRATION FULL COMMITTEE HEARING
COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

**TESTIMONY OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL R. TURNER
ON FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS FOR
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE**

CHAIRMAN STEIL AND RANKING MEMBER MORELLE, GOOD AFTERNOON AND THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF THE BUDGET REQUEST OF THE HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS. I'M JOINED BY MY RANKING MEMBER, CONGRESSMAN JIM HIMES.

IN RECENT YEARS, THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN DISTRACTED BY PARTISAN POLITICS, BUT AT HPSCI'S ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE COMMITTEE WAS ADDRESSED BY SPEAKER MCCARTHY AND MINORITY LEADER JEFFERIES TO DELIVER, IN UNISON, ONE DIRECTIVE:

RETURN THE COMMITTEE'S WORK EXCLUSIVELY TOWARD NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE OVERSIGHT OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND DO SO IN A BIPARTISAN MANNER. RANKING MEMBER HIMES AND I HAVE ACCEPTED THIS CHARGE AND WE HAVE ECHOED THESE EXPECTATIONS WITH THE MEMBERSHIP OF OUR COMMITTEE.

TO ACCOMPLISH OUR REQUIREMENTS, WE ARE REQUESTING \$17.2 MILLION FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS, INCLUDING \$8.2 MILLION FOR THE 1ST SESSION AND \$9.0 MILLION FOR THE SECOND SESSION. THIS REQUEST REPRESENTS A 13.9% INCREASE IN 2023 AND AN ADDITIONAL INCREASE OF 10.0% OVER THAT FOR 2024. IF SUPPORTED, THE REQUEST WILL FUND HPSCI'S PAYROLL, OPERATIONS, AND INVESTMENTS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT), WHICH ARE UNIQUE TO OUR COMMITTEE AND LONG OVERDUE.

WITH THESE MONIES, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS INVESTING IN A RENEWED INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE THAT WILL NOT ONLY CONDUCT OUR OVERSIGHT AND LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES BUT WILL OFFER SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED SUPPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE. THIS IS AN INITIATIVE DRIVEN BY THE SPEAKER'S DESIRE TO ENSURE THAT THE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY OF THE HOUSE IS FULLY INFORMED, INCLUDING—WHEN APPROPRIATE—BY CLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION.

IN PRESENTING HPSCI'S BUDGET, I WANT TO PROVIDE YOU SOME CONTEXT RELATED TO THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. AS WE MEET TODAY, THE UNITED STATES FACES UNPRECEDENTED STRATEGIC THREATS FROM ADVERSARIES INCLUDING CHINA, RUSSIA, NORTH KOREA AND IRAN. OUR ADVERSARIES ARE INVESTING HEAVILY IN MODERNIZED CAPABILITIES AND HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE. THEY ARE TESTING OUR RESOLVE, PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS, AND USING ALL

ELEMENTS OF THEIR NATIONAL POWER TO DIVIDE AND DOMINATE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES AND TO CONTEST ALL DOMAINS.

HPSCI HAS A DUTY TO UNDERSTAND THESE THREATS, OUR COLLECTION POSTURE AGAINST THEM—AND JUST AS IMPORTANTLY, HOW THREAT INFORMATION IS SHARED TO IMPROVE OUR COLLECTIVE SECURITY.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND COLLEAGUES, TIMELY INDICATIONS AND WARNINGS ARE CRITICAL TO SOUND DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY. AND DESPITE THE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL OF OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION, THE VAST MAJORITY OF WHAT WE NEED TO DEFEND OURSELVES MUST BE GAINED THROUGH CLANDESTINE AND COVERT MEANS. IF THE IC FAILS IN THIS MISSION, THE MILITARY WON'T BE ABLE TO DEVELOP COUNTERMEASURES TO NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS; ESPIONAGE IN THE U.S. WILL GO UNCHECKED; THE STATE DEPARTMENT WILL BE UNABLE TO EXPOSE DANGEROUS PLOTS BY CHINA, RUSSIA, AND OTHERS; AND OUR NATION WILL BE FUNDAMENTALLY WEAKER WHEN CONFRONTING ANY FUTURE CRISIS.

IN ADDITION, IT IS THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITY—THE REASON FOR ITS FOUNDING IN 1977—TO GUARD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM ABUSE ORIGINATING FROM OUR NATION'S SPY AGENCIES. SINCE OUR FOUNDING, WE HAVE ENACTED LAWS TO PREVENT INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES FROM TARGETING AMERICANS BUT THESE LAWS, AND THE IC'S

COMPLIANCE, REQUIRE INTENSIVE OVERSIGHT. WE INTEND TO REDOUBLE OUR WORK IN THIS AREA.

MR. CHAIRMAN, HPSCI WILL BECOME A BETTER RESOURCE FOR THE HOUSE. AS YOU KNOW, AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF OUR WORK IS THAT IT MUST BE DONE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, IN A SCIF, AND WITH STRICT SECURITY CONTROLS. TIGHT SECURITY IS NEEDED BECAUSE HPSCI MAINTAINS INFORMATION RELATED TO THE NATION'S MOST SENSITIVE CLASSIFIED ACTIVITIES—ACTIVITIES THAT RISK LIVES AND COME AT GREAT COST.

AT THE SAME TIME, STRINGENT SECURITY AND COMPARTMENTATION FROM THE REST OF THE HOUSE HAS LIMITED OUR ABILITY TO SERVE THE INSTITUTION.

I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB SERVING THE INSTITUTION WHILE PROTECTING SOURCES AND METHODS. I HAVE THEREFORE COMMITTED TO THE SPEAKER THAT HPSCI WILL MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO CONNECT CLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN THE HOUSE.

IN FACT, MY MISSION STATEMENT IS TO CONNECT INTELLIGENCE TO POLICYMAKERS AND DECISION MAKERS IN CONGRESS.

WE HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED THE VALUE PROPOSITION OF OUR NEW RULES—UPDATED EARLIER THIS MONTH—AND SHARED INTELLIGENCE WITH THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

RELATED TO CHINA'S SURVEILLANCE BALLOON THAT TRAVERSED THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

DURING THE COURSE OF THE 118TH CONGRESS, I EXPECT HPSCI TO UTILIZE ALL LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGETARY TOOLS AVAILABLE WITHIN OUR AUTHORITY, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL PIECES OF LEGISLATION, TO BOTH SUPPORT AND HOLD THE IC ACCOUNTABLE. AND WE WILL DO SO IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR FELLOW COMMITTEES.

OUR FUNDING REQUEST FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS WILL ENABLE THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF HIGHLY TRAINED STAFF. DUE TO THE TECHNICAL NATURE OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK, MOST OF THE COMMITTEE'S VACANCIES WILL NEED TO BE FILLED BY STAFF WHO HAVE VERY SPECIFIC SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE.

ADDITIONALLY, ALL COMMITTEE STAFF ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE AND MAINTAIN A TOP SECRET CLEARANCE WITH SCI ACCESSES. NO OTHER COMMITTEE HAS SUCH A REQUIREMENT. THIS MEANS THAT, COMPARED TO THE HOUSE IN GENERAL, IT IS HARDER FOR HPSCI TO FILL JOBS AND RECRUITMENT TO FILL VACANCIES TAKES LONGER. IN SHORT, TURNOVER IS MORE COSTLY AND RETENTION IS CRITICAL. PAY MUST BE COMPETITIVE FOR THE COMMITTEE TO ATTRACT GS-14 AND GS-15 EXPERTS FROM THE IC TO HELP US IN OUR WORK. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SKILLSETS THESE INDIVIDUALS BRING TO IMPROVE CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.

FUNDING WILL ALSO SUPPORT THE INCREASE IN STAFF AT HPSCI BY 6 POSITIONS, WHICH IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE EXPANSION OF THE IC—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SPACE FORCE INTELLIGENCE—AND THE COMMITTEE’S MEMBERSHIP, WHICH HAS GROWN FROM 22 IN THE 116TH CONGRESS TO 25 PERMANENT MEMBERS IN THE 118TH.

ADDITIONALLY, I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT HOW OUR FUNDING REQUEST REFLECTS HPSCI’S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NEEDS—WHICH ARE UNIQUE IN THE HOUSE. AS A SCENE SETTER, I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT—BECAUSE OF THE CLASSIFIED NATURE OF OUR WORK—MEMBERS AND STAFF CAN ONLY PERFORM THEIR OVERSIGHT WORK IN THE COMMITTEE’S OFFICE, WHICH IS A SECURE COMPARTMENTED INFORMATION FACILITY, OR SCIF.

THE COMMITTEE’S UNCLASSIFIED NETWORK IS CONNECTED TO THE HOUSE DOMAIN. THIS NETWORK AND ITS RELATED DEVICES OPERATE LARGELY IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER COMMITTEES. HPSCI BENEFITS FROM THE COMMON SERVICES OF THE HOUSE AND LEVERAGES SHARED RESOURCES. HOWEVER, HPSCI TAKES ADDITIONAL SECURITY-RELATED STEPS IN RECOGNITION OF THE ESCALATED COUNTERINTELLIGENCE THREATS TO OUR OPERATIONS. THIS INCLUDES THE MAINTENANCE OF A SEPARATE ENCLAVE AND FIREWALL WITHIN THE HOUSE NETWORK. ADDITIONALLY, DEVICES USED IN COMMITTEE SPACES OFTEN REQUIRE MODIFICATION FOR USE IN A SCIF. THIS RESULTS IN HIGHER COST, INCLUDING FOR

EQUIPMENT USED ON THE UNCLASSIFIED NETWORK. WE REFLECT THOSE HIGHER COSTS IN OUR BUDGET REQUEST.

ADDITIONALLY, THE COMMITTEE OPERATES AN AIR-GAPPED INTERNAL CLASSIFIED NETWORK THAT IS MAINTAINED EXCLUSIVELY BY HPSCI. THE BULK OF OUR OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES ARE CONDUCTED ON THIS NETWORK, AND ITS RELIABILITY AND SECURITY ARE CRITICAL TO THE LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE. HPSCI SEEKS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO ADDRESS TECHNOLOGY DEFICIENCIES AND TO ADDRESS SECURITY ISSUES FOR THIS NETWORK, WHICH—LIKE ALL NETWORKS—MUST BE SECURED AGAINST KNOWN VULNERABILITIES AND MAINTAINED TO APPROPRIATE STANDARDS. GIVEN THE INFORMATION MAINTAINED ON THE NETWORK, AND THE SOPHISTICATION OF OUR FOREIGN ADVERSARIES, IT IS THE COMMITTEE’S COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE SECURITY OF THIS NETWORK MEETS OR EXCEEDS ALL RELEVANT FEDERAL STANDARDS, INCLUDING CURRENT STANDARDS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEMS.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE, WE MUST SEEK CONTRACTUAL SUPPORT FROM INFORMATION SYSTEM SECURITY PROFESSIONALS WITH APPROPRIATE SECURITY CLEARANCES. CONTRACTED SUPPORT WILL COMPLETE A SURVEY OF ALL NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE, DEVICES, AND SOFTWARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTERNAL NETWORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE RESULTING REPORT, WHICH WILL INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF OUR SECURITY

POSTURE, WILL INFORM ANY NECESSARY RECAPITALIZATION EFFORTS. THE COMMITTEE WILL PROVIDE A DETAILED TIMELINE AND COST ESTIMATES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT WHEN AVAILABLE AND ON REQUEST.

I CANNOT OVERSTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS WORK AND APPRECIATE ANY CONSIDERATION THAT CAN BE PROVIDED TO HPSCI TO ADDRESS THIS MATTER.

LASTLY, THE COMMITTEE REQUESTS ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR ITS BASE-INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BUDGET IN ORDER TO SUPPORT A DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY APPROVED SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY PROGRAM FOR NETWORK EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES PURCHASED FOR USE BY THE COMMITTEE. THE INCREASE IN ESTIMATED COSTS IS REFLECTIVE OF A PREMIUM ASSOCIATED WITH THE SECURE ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND IS BUILT INTO THE MATERIAL HANDLING COSTS FOR EQUIPMENT PURCHASED THROUGH TRUSTED SUPPLIERS.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND COLLEAGUES, THIS FINAL REASON FOR ADDITIONAL IT FUNDING RECOGNIZES THAT THE RISK OF A SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATION AGAINST HPSCI HAS GROWN SUBSTANTIALLY, AS DOCUMENTED IN BOTH OPEN AND CLASSIFIED REPORTING. SECURE IT PROCUREMENT EFFORTS WILL RESULT IN HIGHER ACQUISITION COSTS OF APPROXIMATELY 5% FOR NETWORK EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, AND DEVICES. HOWEVER, THIS INVESTMENT IS

NECESSARY AND THE COMMITTEE REQUESTS THAT ANY INCREASE FOR THIS PURPOSE BE SUSTAINED FOR THE ENTIRE 118TH CONGRESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE FINAL BUDGET AREA WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS IS EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT. LIKE OUR PLAN FOR IMPROVED SUPPORT TO THE HOUSE, THIS IS AN AREA WHERE THE SPEAKER HAS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED HPSCI TO EXPAND. WITH THESE FUNDS, THE COMMITTEE WILL UNDERTAKE AN INCREASED EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM. THIS MEANS THAT WE WILL HOLD COMMITTEE EVENTS OFF OF THE CAPITOL CAMPUS AND OUTSIDE OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

BIPARTISAN EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT WILL INCLUDE A FULL COMMITTEE RETREAT IN EARLY SPRING 2023 AND A FULL COMMITTEE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN LATE SPRING 2023. WE WILL ALSO HAVE NUMEROUS OFF-SITE MEETINGS IN FALL 2023 AT THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND LINCOLN LABS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLICABILITY TO THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR ITS CONSIDERATION OF OUR BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Turner.

Ranking Member Himes, it is hard—by default, I also went to Chairman, but we have moved you as no longer on the select committee.

Ranking Member Himes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAMES A. HIMES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Mr. HIMES. Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle.

Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Intelligence Committee's budget request for this Congress. I am pleased to join Chairman Turner in this budget request. Chairman Turner and his staff have taken a very collaborative and bipartisan approach as the committee's work has gotten underway, and the—

The CHAIRMAN. I just remind the Ranking Member, your mike may not be on, which I can hear you just fine, but I don't think our live feed can hear you.

Mr. HIMES. It was not on. I apologize. I will, however, keep going.

HPSCI, as the Chairman said, is a unique committee in many respects, not least because the agencies we oversee operate nearly entirely in secret. Unlike other committees, which can benefit from the expertise and research of outside experts, journalists, and others, we cannot use those sources. Meanwhile, the task before the committee is vast and growing.

I would note that, in addition to the Iran threat, the North Korea threat, the ongoing work against terrorism, the newly emergent crypto and other technological threats, the committee is now dealing with the Russia-Ukraine issue, which I am not sure we would have anticipated many years ago. Of course China and Taiwan becomes ever more demanding.

We oversee 18 IC agencies and tens of billions of dollars authorized each year, a Herculean task that is done with a staff smaller than many other committees and oversees smaller agencies that are far less opaque.

Additionally, the committee has grown from 22 members in the 116th Congress to 25 members in the 118th Congress, which necessitates additional staff and resources to support member engagements, briefing, travel, and more.

The chairman did a great job covering the unique and specific IT needs, so I won't repeat what he said. I will, however, just focus for a second on our staff. To perform the functions that the House and the American people expect from us, the committee requires a particularly specialized and experienced group of staff members.

As the committee's budget submission reflects, additional resources for professional staff members would ensure the committee's ability to bring on highly qualified and specialized staff, including those with technical backgrounds in high demand in the private sector and elsewhere. An increase in budget resources as well as an accompanying increase in FTEs is more than justified and more important today than it has been in many, many years.

Once again, I would like to thank Chairman Turner for the strong partnership we have established, and I urge, respectfully, the House Administration Committee to support this request.

Thank you, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Himes follows:]

**Testimony for Committee on House Administration
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Ranking Member James A. Himes
February 27, 2023**

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's (HPSCI) budget request for the 118th Congress.

I am pleased to join Chairman Turner in this budget request. Chairman Turner and his staff have taken a collaborative and bipartisan approach as the Committee's work has gotten underway in the 118th Congress. The request we have jointly made to the Committee on House Administration would put HPSCI on strong footing to accomplish the critical priorities we have set out for the 118th Congress.

HPSCI is a unique committee in many respects, not least because the agencies we oversee operate nearly entirely in secret. Unlike other committees which can benefit from the expertise and research of outside experts, journalists, and others, we cannot turn to those sources. Meanwhile, the task before the committee is vast and growing. The Committee oversees 18 IC agencies and tens of billions of dollars authorized each year, a herculean task that is done with a staff smaller than many other committees that oversee smaller agencies that are far less opaque. Additionally, the committee has grown from 22 members in the 116th Congress to 25 members in the 118th Congress, which necessitates additional staff resources to support member engagements, briefings, travel, and more.

To perform the functions that the House and the American people expect us from us, the Committee requires a particularly specialized and experienced group of staff members. As the Committee's budget submission reflects, additional resources for professional staff members would ensure the committee's ability to bring on highly qualified and specialized staff, including those with technical backgrounds in high demand in the private sector and elsewhere. An increase in budget resources as well as an accompanying increase in FTEs is more than justified.

The additional resources requested by the Committee are also justified by the unique requirements of the committee to protect highly classified information. That includes the maintenance and security of an air-gapped classified system, along with other sizable expenses that support and secure the Committee's IT infrastructure. The Committee also incurs additional costs to acquire relevant IT products from a secure supply chain, which is especially critical given the counterintelligence threats we face.

Once again, I'd like to thank Chairman Turner for the strong partnership we have established. I urge the House Administration Committee to support this request. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both very much.

The majority and minority will each now have 5 minutes to question the witnesses.

I will take the majority's time and yield to Mr. Loudermilk for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Appreciate both of you being here. I know, working in intelligence in the Air Force in the past, I know how critical this is and how critical this committee is because I think I have seen, and I think the American people have seen, some failures in intelligence community over previous years. In fact, I think maybe the committee had its eye off the ball in previous years. I am very pleased to see the new direction and the leadership going forward.

There are many challenges. You guys have brought up challenges. I mean, everything from North Korea, Iran, Russia, and China. What do you see as the most significant challenges for the committee itself in this Congress, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. TURNER. Well, one of the aspects about this committee that is different from others that needs to be taken in consideration when you review our budget is that every member has their own portfolio and, in that, has the ability to order up briefings and to conduct overseas travel and domestic travel for codels for fact-finding.

If you will, imagine a committee of 25 people where they all have the status of a subcommittee chairmanship in other committees. That allows us to have the breadth to deal with the broad areas of some of the challenges that we have. For example, from my background, I deal with nuclear weapons, both our adversaries and ours. We have—and Dr. Wenstrup, who deals with, you know, bio-weapons, chemical weapons, obviously COVID origins, and also the fentanyl issue.

As you go through our committee of people like yourselves with your experience that you were expressing, have then that focus that allows us to have that 360 view of all the threats and to be able to deal with them in support of the committee, that is one of the aspects that does increase our costs.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Thank you.

Other areas that you know, as I look at it, it appears to have an impact. I am probably one of the few members that actually go into the SCIF and I read them—the budget request. I mean, we have brought on Space Force since I have been in Congress, and you are obviously increasing the committee membership.

What does the oversight of, let's say, Space Force and increasing the membership—what kind of impact does that have on the budget?

Mr. TURNER. Right, so as I was describing, where each of these members have, in our committee, a status that another committee would be a subcommittee chairmanship, they need staff to be able to pursue their portfolio. In addition, then, with the add of Space Force, it is not just the functions of Space Force, but it is the inter-relationship between the IC and what Space Force is accomplishing, and looking to their future, but we, like the Armed Services Committee, we vote on the budget and the funding priorities of the intelligence community. To do that, we have to be informed

in what they do and what their future capabilities might be. And that process of becoming informed also is an expense.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Now, I actually worked in the IT sector in intelligence back when it was just coming—was coming to age, as Ethernet was new. I understand the specific challenges that you have in your unique environment and you have touched on it.

How significant of an impact does this, you know, airgapped IT network requirement have on your request?

Mr. TURNER. It is significant. As you can imagine, we are a significant target, and, also, we have to be in a way that we can host and marry ourselves to the intelligence community to exchange data and information so that we can review it, so that we can assist and help them.

Those are very unique systems you won't find anywhere else in the Capitol and also cannot just be taken directly from the IC itself. So it is a unique system, but it has to be able to communicate with and protect—

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Right.

Mr. TURNER [continuing]. the data and information.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Alright. Well, I appreciate that.

Last—and, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, any other information you would like to share that we haven't covered?

Mr. TURNER. The one thing I would say is that this is your new bipartisan Intelligence Committee. We are working together. My Ranking Member, Jim Himes, and I have both committed ourselves to that.

That means that we are going to be doing more, not just with the additional members that we have but doing more in interacting with the committees. To be able to do that, we have to do it in a professional manner, and that is reflected in the budget we have submitted.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Alright. Mr. Himes, anything?

Mr. HIMES. Amen.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Alright. Well, thank you both, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Chairman Turner and Ranking Member Himes, for not only being here but the important work that you both do.

I wanted to follow up the question from Mr. Loudermilk. Just to give me a sense, the increase that you have requested—and you have talked about the uniqueness of your mission. Can you sort of assign a percentage of the dollar increase, how much of that is as a result of the sort of uniqueness that you—that the committee has in terms of its responsibilities?

Mr. TURNER. I wouldn't be able to quantify it as a percentage, but I would tell you this: You know, we are both the legislative branch. We are a committee of the House, and we are both operating on almost an agency level where we have the custodial responsibility to handle and manage the information and data that we receive from the intelligence community and its agencies.

That duality, where we have to be equal to them in order to be able to do our function, causes an increase in costs for us, and that is reflected in our budget.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good.

I note, too, in your written submission, relative to access to the minority for the allocation that is theirs, that you anticipate no changes in their ability to access resources they see fit under the allocation. Is that—I just want you to confirm that—I think that is what you said. You are using the same—

Mr. TURNER. Correct. We are operating in the same that we had before, and I think Representative Himes can speak to this issue also.

Mr. HIMES. Yes. No. We have been working quite well together to make sure that it is both consistent with precedent and, you know, fair and gives the minority the resources that we need. I think we are pretty close to there in terms of getting our own budget.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you.

I want to thank you both for—again, for the mission, and I am grateful to hear about the Speaker and the minority leader both, you know, giving you the charge of working in a bipartisan way. What you do is critically important to the future of the United States and its national security, and I appreciate all that you do.

With that, I will yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. [Presiding.] Alright. Thank you.

Well, I appreciate both of you being here. We appreciate the work you are doing, too, and the new direction the Intel Committee is taking. Thank you very much.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. He has been up here all day, so—the committee now welcomes Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

As a reminder, we have read your written statements, and we ask that you limit your testimony to 5 minutes each and make sure that your mike is turned on as we can hear you, but we want to make sure the live feed can as well.

I now recognize Chairman Graves for 5 minutes, followed by Ranking Member Mr. Larsen.

Mr. Graves.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. SAM GRAVES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Mr. GRAVES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you today the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's budget request for this Congress, 118th.

In consultation with the Ranking Member, the committee has requested an 8-percent increase over our 2022 funding levels, and that level reflects an inflation-based increase and is going to provide the committee with the necessary resources to tackle our aggressive legislative and oversight agenda for this Congress.

On the legislative front, the committee already has begun discussions on reauthorizing several major agencies and programs under the committee's vast jurisdiction. These include the Coast Guard; Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, PHMSA; the National Transportation Safety Board, which is obviously leading the investigation into the recent Ohio freight train derailment;

the Maritime Administration; and the Federal Maritime Commission; and the committee's biggest undertaking, the reauthorization of FAA, which is set to expire on October 1st.

The committee also plans to undertake the regular review of Army Corps projects and programs in 2024. Equally important, the committee must provide oversight over the many laws and funding that was passed last Congress, including the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, the American Rescue Plan, and the CHIPS Act. These laws represent nearly a trillion dollars in spending across every area of the committee's jurisdiction, from DOT to GSA, and FEMA to the Coast Guard.

The American people expect to ensure that the administration spends—expect us to ensure that the administration spends those dollars wisely and according to the law, and there is a shared interest in conducting that oversight.

As part of that oversight effort, the committee plans a very robust travel agenda, and it is going to include official field hearings and also oversight of infrastructure projects and programs across the country. Infrastructure impacts every single corner of the country, and each community has very diverse needs, and we intend to get out there and see that firsthand.

In addition, the budget accounts for the fact that the staff salary cap was raised last Congress, and the committee is very lucky to have many long-tenured staffers with very vast—some vast institutional knowledge, and so our proposed budget is going to help the committee with staff retention as much as anything, but also allows us to be competitive in bringing on new staff to deliver on our legislative and oversight agenda.

With that, I look forward to answering any questions you have, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Graves follows:]

Chairman Sam Graves
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
118th Committee Funding Proposal
Tuesday, February 28, 2023
1:00 p.m.

***Chairman Graves Statement on the Committee's Budget
Submission:***

- Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle.
- I appreciate the opportunity to share with you the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's budget request for the 118th Congress.
- In consultation with the Ranking Member, the Committee has requested an 8 percent increase over our 2022 funding levels.
- That level reflects an inflation-based increase and will provide the Committee with the necessary resources to tackle our aggressive legislative and oversight agenda for the 118th Congress.
- On the legislative front, the Committee already has begun discussions on reauthorizing several major agencies and programs under the Committee's vast jurisdiction.
- These include the following:
 - The Coast Guard for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025;

Chairman Sam Graves
 Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
 118th Committee Funding Proposal
 Tuesday, February 28, 2023
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- **The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA);**
- **The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which is leading the investigation into the recent Ohio freight train derailment;**
- **The Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC);**
- **And the Committee's biggest undertaking, the reauthorization of the FAA, which is set to expire on October 1st.**
- **The Committee also plans to undertake the regular review of Army Corps projects and programs in 2024.**
- **Equally important, the Committee must provide oversight over the many laws and funding that was passed last Congress including the following:**
 - *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act;*
 - *Inflation Reduction Act*
 - *American Rescue Plan (COVID relief bill); and*
 - *CHIPS Act*
- **These laws represent nearly \$1 trillion in spending across every area of the Committee's jurisdiction, from the DOT to the GSA to FEMA and the Coast Guard.**

Chairman Sam Graves
 Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
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 1:00 p.m.

- **The American people expect us to ensure this Administration spends those dollars wisely and according to the law and there is a shared interest in conducting oversight.**
- **As part of that oversight effort, the Committee plans a robust travel agenda that will include official field hearings and also oversight of infrastructure projects and programs.**
- **Infrastructure impacts every corner of the country, and each community has diverse needs. We intend to get out there and see that firsthand.**
- **In addition, the budget accounts for the fact that the staff salary cap was raised last Congress and the Committee is lucky to have many long tenured staffers with vast institutional knowledge.**
- **Our proposed budget will help the Committee with staff retention but also allows us to be competitive in bringing on new staff to deliver on our legislative and oversight agenda this Congress.**
- **With that, I look forward to answering your questions and I yield back the remainder of my time.**

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Larsen.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. RICK LARSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Mr. LARSEN. Chair and Ranking Member and other members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to join Chair Graves in presenting the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure budget request for the 118th.

The T&I Committee has a long history of bipartisan cooperation with both sides realizing the importance of investing in our Nation's infrastructure, ensuring the safety of our transportation systems, and creating jobs. I expect that cooperation to continue under Chair Graves' leadership.

Now, just looking back to the 117th Congress, we passed bipartisan legislation authorizing the U.S. Coast Guard and a fifth consecutive and bipartisan Water Resources Development Act. We also acted decisively to bolster our economy, to limit the fallout from COVID-19, the pandemic, while modernizing and transforming the way people and goods move with the passage of several landmark bills, pieces of the American Rescue Plan, pieces of the Inflation Reduction Act, pieces of the CHIPS and Science Act, and of course the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Part of the committee's focus this year will be oversight of these bills, particularly the BIL, to ensure that funds we provided are being used for the intended purposes. I look forward to working with Chair Graves to do just that.

As the Chair noted, we have a full legislative agenda for the 118th Congress. First and foremost, we must pass legislation reauthorizing the FAA before the end of September. The committee also intends to reauthorize the National Transportation Safety Board, the Coast Guard, the Maritime Administration, Federal Maritime Commission, and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's pipeline safety programs.

For us to do the job for the American people, we request that you fund the T&I Committee at a modest increase of 8 percent over our 2022 funding level. This funding will be used to ensure we can retain the oversight and infrastructure specialists who can help us achieve all of our objectives and accommodate a significant increase in travel costs due to the lack of travel during the past few years.

The committee has a robust and bipartisan travel plan, to include both domestic and international travel, that will help inform our legislative agenda and allow for greater oversight of the projects and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

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 nonpersonnel budget, like travel and other things, will continue to be shared fairly between the majority and minority.

I look forward to a strong partnership with the Chair this year in the 118th Congress, and, with your help, the Committee on T&I will achieve our shared objectives and be one of the most productive committees in the 118th Congress.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Larsen follows:]

THE HONORABLE RICK LARSEN
RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to join Chairman Graves in presenting the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's budget request for the 118th Congress.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has a long history of bipartisan cooperation, with both sides realizing the importance of investing in our Nation's infrastructure, ensuring the safety of our transportation systems and creating jobs. I expect that cooperation to continue under Chairman Graves' leadership.

In the 117th Congress, we passed bipartisan legislation authorizing the U.S. Coast Guard and the fifth consecutive and bipartisan Water Resources Development Act.

We also acted decisively to bolster our economy and limit the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, while modernizing and transforming the way people and goods move, with the passage of several landmark bills: the American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Part of the Committee's focus this year will be oversight of these bills—particularly the BIL—to ensure the funds we have provided are being used for their intended purposes. I look forward to working with Chairman Graves to do just that.

As Chairman Graves noted, we have a full legislative agenda for the 118th Congress. First and foremost, we must pass legislation reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration before the end of September.

The Committee also intends to reauthorize the National Transportation Safety Board, U.S. Coast Guard, Maritime Administration, Federal Maritime Commission, and the Pipeline and the Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's pipeline safety programs.

For us to do our jobs for the American people, we request that you fund the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure at a modest increase of eight percent over our 2022 funding level. This funding will be used to ensure we can retain the oversight and infrastructure specialists who can help us achieve our objectives and accommodate a significant increase in travel costs due to a lack of travel during the past few years.

The Committee has a robust and bipartisan travel plan to include both domestic and international travel that will help inform our legislative agenda and allow for greater oversight of the projects and programs under the jurisdiction of the Committee.

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 the Majority and Minority.

I look forward to a strong partnership with Chairman Graves in the 118th Congress. With your help, I know the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will achieve our shared objectives and be one of the most productive committees in Congress.

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

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, thank you, and appreciate you being here to testify.

As you mentioned, the committee—your legislative agenda in the 118th Congress includes reauthorizing policies and programs for the FAA, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, National Transportation Safety Board, U.S. Coast Guard, Maritime Administration, and Federal Maritime Commission, as well as beginning to develop the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, which authorizes projects and policies of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. You are going to be a little bit busy, I think.

In your budget submission, you mentioned all these activities will require the committee to leverage outside technology and software. What technology software is the committee evaluating, and how will that software assist the committee in getting through this heavy legislative agenda in the 118th Congress? Mr. Chairman?

Mr. GRAVES. So that the software we are using, we use—what is it? The HOP? What was it? HOPS, which we obviously track our—you know, the salaries and our leaves and stuff like that, which our personnel office is using, too, and so we are obviously trying to bring the committee up to speed and—you know, in utilizing that technology, doing the best we can to—you know, to provide that interactive, you know, that opportunity.

Also for people to be able to tie in when it comes to—we are also using technology and software when it comes to doing the earmark process through WRDA, and, in the last—you know, in the infrastructure bill that we were working on, you know, allows the access to that and being able to pull that information down. So—

Mr. LOUDERMILK. So the software is pretty critical?

Mr. GRAVES. The software is extraordinarily critical.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay.

Mr. GRAVES. Yes. We need to keep up with them, yes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. This is an upgrade of the existing software you have?

Mr. GRAVES.

[Nonverbal response.]

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. The only other question I have, the committee's budget request includes 203,765 in funding to pay for subscriptions to publications. If the House were to consider providing additional subscriptions on an enterprisewide level, which subscriptions would be most beneficial to your committee?

Mr. GRAVES. Going back to what I was mentioning earlier, too, we obviously have to—with some of that software, there comes a subscription with that as well, and then obviously keeping up with everything that goes on in the, you know, entire transportation industry and what goes along with that.

Updating that software is probably the biggest thing when we talk about updating. The subscriptions that tie into that is just like the HOPS software that goes along with tracking salaries and leave and everything that goes with that. It requires a subscription as well, not just the initial cost of the software.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Alright. Well, at this point, that is all the questions I have.

I now recognize Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Good afternoon, Chairman Graves, and Ranking Member Larsen. Thanks for being here. Thanks for all you do.

Just a couple of really quick questions.

We asked a couple of Chairs about this. In the last Congress, when it came to field hearings and scheduling them and coordinating them, there was a sort of system developed that includes the Sergeant at Arms, the Capitol Police, and the Clerk's Office for purposes of court reporters, Chief Administrative Officer, office responsible for broadcasting, live-streaming, et cetera.

Do you intend to continue to use that system, which we think saved a fair amount of time and money? Do you expect to utilize that, sir?

Mr. GRAVES. I fully do and you know, we haven't done a lot. In fact, all of us in Congress, we haven't done a whole lot of travel the last couple of years, obviously because of COVID and the pandemic. You know, we are going to do a lot of travel with this committee, and just simply because the travel itself is, you know, is part of our jurisdiction, you know, the biggest part of our jurisdiction overall, but we intend—absolutely. We intend to utilize the same system—

Mr. MORELLE. Very good.

Mr. GRAVES [continuing]. that we had in the past.

Mr. MORELLE. I appreciate the fact that you've agreed on the allocation of the split between the majority and minority. In your written submission, you indicated that the minority would not have any impediments to using their allocation. I assume you are going to continue to commit to that, sir?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes. Yes. We don't have a problem at all with—you know, and we can adjust that, too, if we need to, but Rick and I have a pretty good relationship.

Mr. MORELLE. Good.

Mr. Larsen, you feel confident that you will continue to have access to your resources, and you are comfortable with the allocations?

Mr. LARSEN. Yes. The allocation is a traditional allocation for this committee. I can't speak to other committees. It is traditional for this committee, and I don't know of any circumstance in my 22 years in Congress where the existing majority tried to grab into the minority's allocation. I have no concern at all about that.

I will take Chair Graves' offer to increase that allocation that he just said at any time, so—but yes.

Mr. MORELLE. You are willing to accept that?

Mr. LARSEN. I would be willing to deign to accept that, absolutely.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, very good. I appreciate both of you being here, for the good work that you do.

With that, I will yield back, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN.

[Presiding.] Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, thank you both for coming before us today. This, today's hearing, before our markup next week, is really our commitment to returning to regular order in the House and restoring transparency to the American people, and appreciate both of your testimony here today. Have a good day.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Chair.

Mr. GRAVES. Thanks, Chairman and Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee is going to stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on House Administration is called back to order.

We thank Chairman Lucas for joining us here today on a busy day. This is our commitment to returning to regular order, to improving transparency for the American people and particularly budget requests that this hearing is about and the markup that will take place next week.

We will recognize you, Mr. Chairman, for 5 minutes, for opening remarks. I will have 5 minutes for both the majority and the minority in total to ask questions, and we will make it to votes before those are wrapped up.

With that Mr. Chairman, I yield to you 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. FRANK D. LUCAS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Mr. LUCAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member and members of the committee.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the funding for the Science Committee today. Before I begin, I would like to commend the chairman for restarting the formal budget process. I am a strong proponent of regular order, and I believe this process will pay off with increased transparency and more efficient spending.

Unfortunately, my Ranking Member, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, couldn't join us today, but let me assure you this is a bipartisan request we are submitting today.

For the record, I would like to submit comments from the ranking member of the Science Committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lofgren follows:]

Committee Budget Testimony for the Committee on House Administration**Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren****Committee on Science, Space, and Technology****February 28, 2023**

Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, thank you for having me here today to testify about the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's budget request for the 118th Congress. I would like to say at the outset that Chairman Lucas and his staff collaborated closely with me and my staff in formulating this request, and I fully support it.

The Science Committee bore the brunt of some very steep committee budget cuts a decade ago. From 2010 to 2013, the Committee's budget was cut by over 26%. Although in recent years, the Committee on House Administration has tried to consistently increase the Science Committee's budget, the Science Committee's budget in real dollars has still not fully recovered from these steep cuts.

At the same time, the budgets of the Federal agencies that the Science Committee oversees have seen very large increases in recent years through increased regular appropriations as well as additional monies found in bills like the Chips and Science Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. While I was a strong supporter of this increased funding, I also want to be a good steward of taxpayer funding for these programs. Quite frankly, I think that will be hard to do without bringing on additional professional staff to the Committee to conduct oversight.

The last point I'd like to make is that the quality of the staff is also a factor in our ability to conduct oversight. Due to the highly technical programs the Science Committee oversees, we have the need for people with specialized expertise. The majority of my staff have advanced degrees or backgrounds in technical fields. Recruiting professionals with these qualifications is very difficult in the current labor market. We simply have to be able to offer candidates competitive salaries if we want to attract qualified professionals to the Science Committee.

The budget that Chairman Lucas and I have jointly submitted would allow the Committee to fully staff up and conduct the skilled oversight of the technical programs within our jurisdiction. The budget would also allow for increased site visits to our nation's various laboratories and field centers which is also critically important for effective oversight.

I want to thank you again for having me testify today, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Mr. LUCAS. Thank you. Let me say right off the bat that our committee's request budget does contain some thoughtful considered increases. It is our aim to act responsibly when it comes to spending taxpayers' dollars, which is why these increases have been limited to only what is absolutely necessary.

Our priorities include funding a robust oversight program, resources for increased field hearings and site visits, modernization of our workspace, and modest increases in staff salaries to meet—to be—stay competitive with personnel offices in the private sector.

All told, our budget increase calls for a 23.5-percent increase over last year. When considering that request, it is worth noting that our personal offices received a 21-percent increase in their MRAs last Congress. Standing committees received significantly less in order to fund multiple select committees.

It is also important to note that the Science Committee's responsibilities have grown dramatically over the past few years. The purpose of the Science Committee is to ensure that the United States maintains our global economic, scientific, and technological leadership. That work is more important now than ever as we face a growing threat from the Chinese Communist Party.

If given the chance, the CCP would not only take market share from us but will also seek to impose their values on critically developing technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum information sciences, unmanned aerial vehicles. We cannot afford the economic, political, or national security consequences of falling behind the CCP.

In addition to driving American innovation and countering the threat from the CCP, our committee is tasked with providing oversight for a substantial portion of the science agencies to protect taxpayers' resources and ensure that we are meeting our strategic goals.

Since the budget for this committee was last set, there has been a significant increase in the importance of and scope of our policy area. Several major legislative initiatives, including the Energy Act of 2020, the CHIPS and Science Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, dramatically increased the budgets of departments and agencies under our supervision.

For example, in addition to the committee's regular oversight of roughly \$15 billion in annual appropriations at the Department of Energy, we will now be overseeing an additional \$45 billion in appropriations included in the IRA and the IIJA. There are plenty more examples just like this. The National Institutes of Standards and Technology, an agency with an annual budget of around a billion dollars, received \$52 billion in mandatory funding in the CHIPS and Science Act to support domestic semiconductor manufacturing.

This increase in spending across our agencies must be accomplished by an increase—I should say accompanied by an increase in congressional oversight. To do this, we need additional policy staff with expertise in highly technical issue areas, such as quantum computing, fusion energy, advanced air mobility, and climate sciences. The competitive jobs market for these roles, combined with higher cost of living, mean the committee must increase our

payroll budget if we are going to find staff capable of fulfilling our expanded oversight responsibilities.

I am looking forward to a productive year ahead as the Science Committee empowers American innovation and ensures taxpayers are getting the maximum return on their investments in research and development.

I appreciate your time today and as you notice, I am attempting to be very prompt, and look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lucas follows:]

House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chairman Frank Lucas

Statement before the Committee on House Administration

Funding for the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

118th Congress

February 28, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss funding for the Science Committee today, and I am pleased to be joined by my Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren, who many of you know well from her time as the previous Chair of the House Administration Committee.

Before I begin, I would like to commend Chairman Steil for restarting the formal budget process.

I'm a strong proponent of regular order, and I believe this process will pay off with increased transparency and more efficient spending.

Let me say right off the bat that our Committee's requested budget does contain some thoughtfully considered increases. It is our aim to act responsibly when it comes to spending taxpayer dollars, which is why these increases have been limited to only what is absolutely necessary.

Our priorities include funding for a robust oversight program, resources for increased field hearings and site visits, modernization of our workspace, and modest increases to staff salaries to stay competitive with personal offices and the private sector.

All told, our budget request calls for a 23.5% increase over last year. When considering that request, it's worth noting that while personal offices received a 21% increase to their MRA last Congress, standing committees received significantly less in order to fund multiple select committees.

It's also important to note that the Science Committee's responsibilities have grown dramatically in the past few years.

The purpose of the Science Committee is to ensure the United States maintains our global economic, scientific, and technological leadership. That work is more important now than ever, as we face a growing threat from the Chinese Communist Party.

If given the chance, the CCP will not only take market share from us, but will also seek to impose their values on critical developing technologies like Artificial Intelligence, quantum information sciences, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

We cannot afford the economic, political, or national security consequences from falling behind the CCP.

In addition to driving American innovation and countering the threat from the CCP, our Committee is tasked with providing oversight for a substantial portfolio of scientific agencies to protect taxpayer dollars and ensure we're meeting our strategic goals.

Since the budget for this Committee was last set, there has been a significant increase in the importance and scope of our policy area. Several major legislative initiatives—including the Energy Act of 2020, the CHIPS and Science Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act—dramatically increased the budgets of departments and agencies under our jurisdiction.

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This increase in spending across our agencies must be accompanied by an increase in Congressional oversight. To do this, we need additional policy staff with experience in highly technical issue areas such as quantum computing, fusion energy, advanced air mobility, and climate sciences.

The competitive job market for these roles, combined with a higher cost of living, mean the Committee must increase our payroll budget if we are going to find staff capable of fulfilling our expanded oversight responsibilities.

I'm looking forward to a productive year ahead as the Science Committee empowers American innovation and ensures taxpayers are getting the maximum return on their investments in research and development.

Both myself as well as Ranking Member Lofgren appreciate your time today, and I am prepared to answer any questions you may have.

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

We will now take 5 minutes from the majority and then 5 for the minority for the purpose of asking questions.

I will yield to Ms. Bice for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to say thank you to my fellow Oklahoman and Chairman of the SST Committee, Congressman Lucas, for being here this afternoon.

Congressman, what impact has the increase in the speaker's pay order in the 117th Congress and the competitive job market for staff with knowledge and expertise in the highly technical issue areas that we have to oversee in SST had on the personnel portion of the committee's budget?

Mr. LUCAS. Well, it has had a big impact, and it is the big reason that we are requesting an increase in our budget payroll. The changes to the Speaker's pay order and the significant increase in personal office MRAs last Congress has undoubtedly shifted upward the pay scale across all levels of Capitol Hill, and this is a good thing.

For us to be competitive in hiring and recruiting the staff necessary to enact our agenda, we have got to follow suit, and we have to increase our staff salaries if we are going to have competent people.

Mrs. BICE. Do you believe that is because of the technical expertise that these individuals need to have to be able to provide—

Mr. LUCAS. Absolutely.

Mrs. BICE [continuing]. information to the committee?

Mr. LUCAS. Many of the disciplines that we deal with in the Science Committee are very challenging, complex, hard sciences. There is only a limited number of people available, and they are the kind of people that industry and the administration looks for, too. We have got to have folks who can work with us to ask the right questions, to look in the right corners. If we don't spend the money, we are not going to get them, and then we won't have effective oversight. We spend a lot of money that we need to make sure it is well spent.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you.

In the answers to the budget questionnaire, you mentioned that the committee is in the process of researching and procuring document management software and have budgeted \$80,000 for each session for this purpose.

Are you looking to buy an off-the-shelf program, or is this custom-made software?

Mr. LUCAS. Staff is still doing the research, but I would anticipate off the shelf. I want to have an effective program to deal with this mountain of information coming and going, but by the same token, I think off the shelf is—if it is available, is the most cost-effective route. We don't need to create something special for the Science Committee.

Mrs. BICE. For the record, I agree.

Mr. Chairman, that is the end of my questioning. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Thanks so much.

Thank you, Chairman Lucas, for being here. I appreciate your comments about the expanded work that the committee will have to do.

I had the privilege of debating the rule on the CHIPS and Science Act. Grateful that it passed, and we have a great deal of work to do both from a national and economic security point of view, and your committee is going to have a lot of responsibility for that.

Just a couple of things that you could help me better appreciate. I know, in the—first of all, the overall increase from the 117th to 118th Congresses, I did the fast math. It is about a third of an increase, about 33-percent increase over the 2-year period. When you sort of look at it, obviously fair amount of that is in personnel. Is it an increase in terms of the number—the census of workers, or do you expect a dramatic increase because of the type of people you are looking for will require higher compensation?

Mr. LUCAS. I would say it is a combination of both, but the most dramatic thing will just simply be the quality of individuals that we have to have. We have outstanding people now. Maintaining their position on the committee staff and their enthusiasm will be important, too.

When you have literally the amount of dollars that have been allocated and are flowing through the Department of Energy and other Federal agencies, being able to oversee all of that, my personal perspective, as I have mentioned to the various members of the committee, is CHIPS and Science is an example of where we made a dramatic commitment of resources in Congress to boldly step forward in a direction that we were falling behind in. Whether it is AI or quantum, there are a variety of other things out there that may require this sort of an effort in the future, perhaps near future, but in the future.

I want to demonstrate that we were wise and efficient stewards of the citizens' resources with CHIPS and Science as an example because then they will trust us when we have to do something big and bold again. If we don't do that work, they might not ever give us the chance again when we really desperately would need it to move forward aggressively.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you for that.

I notice too that you have about 300,000 in the budget—300—I thought it was about 300,000. I am looking for it, but in any way—case, correct me if I am wrong on field hearings, but I didn't see any hearings actually scheduled.

When do you anticipate having sort of an idea of where you will go for field hearings?

Mr. LUCAS. When I have a better feel for the resources that will be available to me—

Mr. MORELLE. Well, let's assume that it was as you requested.

Mr. LUCAS. We have a myriad of national labs scattered all across the country that—some of which have existed since the 1930's. Going and seeing them and addressing their infrastructure needs, the challenges they face. We have a variety of regular department research programs from Department of Energy on down going on. We have a number of universities, institutions are doing cutting-edge research.

Taking the members out in the field to see what is going on, to learn what the priorities should be, to verify the use of the resources, the committee is essentially brand new membershipwise, and help bringing our people up to speed, both Republicans and Democrats, is critically important.

That is part of why I am so pleased with the relationship I had with my predecessor, Chairman Johnson, and now working wonderfully with my Ranking Member Lofgren. We are going to do this as a team.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, as one of the people who is a particularly big booster of the regional innovation hubs, I am hoping to maybe invite you up to—

Mr. LUCAS. Absolutely.

Mr. MORELLE [continuing]. Upstate New York. We would love to have you.

One other—two quick matters, but one is, under what is called “other services,” I was looking—there is no further description in the chart. A big increase from 13,000 to 170,000. Can you just tell me essentially what that is for? Do you know?

I am trying to look in the detail. I don’t necessarily see it. Non-specialized training went up 75,000; and other services, an additional 82,000, it looks like to me.

It is primarily for IT? Yes. It looks like it is primarily web support and IT. Is that your understanding?

Mr. LUCAS. That would be the logical response, yes.

Voice. It is for the minority, I believe.

Mr. MORELLE. Okay. Then one—and I apologize. I just—one last question. I didn’t see it in the written material, but typically I have been asking the chairs whether or not, given the allotment, two-thirds/one-third, whether or not you will commit to allowing the minority access to their resources without impacting that?

Mr. LUCAS. Absolutely. The customary relationship. I had a wonderful one as Ranking Member for 4 years with Chairwoman Johnson. I intend to have a wonderful one with Ranking Member Lofgren.

Mr. MORELLE. Great. Thanks so much for your service, sir.

Mr. LUCAS. We work together on the committee.

Mr. MORELLE. Yep. Yep. Thank you for being here.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your testimony today, Mr. Lucas. I appreciate you being part of our commitment to reestablishing regular order and transparency.

Without objection, each member, including our witnesses, will have 5 legislative days to insert additional materials into the record or to revise and extend their remarks.

If there is no further business, I thank the members for their participation.

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:42 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]