

COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MARCH 1, 2023
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C O N T E N T S

	Page
OPENING STATEMENTS	
The Honorable Bryan Steil, Representative from the State of Wisconsin	1
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Representative from the State of Washington	2
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Representative from the State of New Jersey ...	6
The Honorable Joseph Morelle, Representative from the State of New York	9
The Honorable Mike Gallagher, Representative from the State of Wisconsin ...	11
The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Representative from the State of Illinois	15
The Honorable Glenn "G.T." Thompson, Representative from the State of Pennsylvania	19
The Honorable Patrick T. McHenry, Representative from the State of North Carolina	28
The Honorable Maxine Waters, Representative from the State of California	32
The Honorable Mike Rogers, Representative from the State of Alabama	40
The Honorable Adam Smith, Representative from the State of Washington	43
The Honorable Mark E. Green, M.D., Representative from the State of Tennessee	49
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, Representative from the State of Mississippi	52
The Honorable Michael Guest, Representative from the State of Mississippi ...	57
The Honorable Jason T. Smith, Representative from the State of Missouri	71
The Honorable Richard E. Neal, Representative from the State of Massachusetts	75
The Honorable Michael T. McCaul, Representative from the State of Texas	80
The Honorable Gregory W. Meeks, Representative from the State of New York	84
PREPARED STATEMENTS	
Cathy McMorris Rodgers	4
Frank Pallone, Jr.	8
Mike Gallagher	13
Raja Krishnamoorthi	16
David Scott	21
Glenn "G.T." Thompson	24
Patrick T. McHenry	30
Maxine Waters	34
Mike Rogers	41
Adam Smith	44
Mark E. Green, M.D.	50
Bennie G. Thompson	53
Michael Guest	59
Susan Wild	64
Jason T. Smith	73
Richard E. Neal	76
Michael T. McCaul	82
Gregory W. Meeks	85
Roger Williams	90
Nydia M. Valázquez	93

PART 2: COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:02 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 and General Counsel, Acting Parliamentarian; Hillary Lassiter, Chief Clerk; Janet Schwab, Deputy Staff Director of Advice & Guidance, and Operations; Nick Crocker, Deputy Staff Director; Jordan Wilson, Director of Member Services; Cade Alcock, Assistant Clerk; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Matthew Schlesinger, Minority Oversight Counsel; Owen Reilly, Minority Professional Staff Member; Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk; and Andrew Garcia, Minority Staff Assistant.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BRYAN STEIL, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WISCONSIN, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on House Administration will come to order. I note a quorum is present.

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

I would like to thank my colleagues for their attendance for day two of our Committee funding hearings. In consultation with the Ranking Member, we are going to move right into today's business. Today, we will hear from the Chair and Ranking Members of 10 committees, beginning with Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers for the Energy and Commerce panel. We are going to then continue as we did yesterday. We will be giving 5 minutes to the Chair and the Ranking Member for opening statements, then 5 minutes each for the majority and minority to ask questions in total, as we did yesterday.

Cognizant of time, we are going to dive right in.

Thank you for being here with us, Chair Rodgers, and we will yield to you for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE
OF WASHINGTON**

Mrs. RODGERS. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Morelle, and to all the members. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the Energy and Commerce Committee's funding request for the 118th Congress. Our request reflects the anticipated needs of the committee's majority and minority to best fulfill our Article I responsibilities.

A well-functioning legislative committee is the best way that we assert our Article I powers on behalf of the people that we represent.

I am proud of E&C's rich history of plowing the hard ground necessary to legislate, deliver results, and improve people's lives. Millions of Americans are depending upon us to tackle today's greatest challenges so they have the opportunity for a brighter future.

I am also grateful for the relationship that we have built, that I have been able to build together with the Ranking Member now, Mr. Pallone. It is a relationship that is built on trust because I know that when—that trust is when the magic happens, and it is foundational to everything that we do.

Last Congress, we worked closely together to maximize every penny of the committee's budget so both the majority and the minority could meet their needs. We also worked to improve how the committee operates. For the first time in the history of Congress, we held a bipartisan staff retreat. While Frank and I disagree on many things, we always agree to be good stewards of the committee's resources to better Energy and Commerce, the House, and deliver for taxpayers.

Our committee has hit the ground running. By March 31st, Energy and Commerce will have completed 31 committee activities, including hearings in the field and Rayburn, markups, roundtables. We have managed five rule bills on the floor, including the first open rule this Congress, which considered 78 amendments in real time.

In addition to supporting the fast pace to produce quality legislation, our request will give additional resources needed to increase our oversight capacity, improve Member involvement, modernize how we operate, and retain high-quality staff.

There are several highlights of our funding request that I would like to share with you today: No. 1, boosting our work to conduct oversight and investigations of this administration and woke corporations under the leadership of Representative Griffith. He is our subcommittee Chairman of Oversight and Investigations.

In addition to more staff, I have identified software to scrutinize more than \$500 billion—half a trillion dollars—that we have identified that is within our jurisdiction. This software would help us track this spending and really help us expose waste, fraud, and abuse.

I am committed to organizing more field hearings and site visits. There is no substitute for the members actually going on the ground outside of Washington, DC, to hear directly from those that are impacted. Last month, we held two field hearings in Texas where we had the participation of 20 Members from both parties.

Our ability to significantly increase these activities is really a matter of resources.

I am thrilled that Chairman Steil established a subcommittee focused on modernization efforts. I have requested funds to work with the CAO to build software which would drastically improve our productivity and effectiveness and hopefully becomes software that will help all committees. For example, the ability to create dynamic letter-tracking and automated notices would significantly improve our oversight and investigations.

Finally, the quick and dramatic increases in the salary cap for House employees last Congress has really significantly changed the employee marketplace. The starting salaries for new staff in the 118th Congress is averaging between 6 to 12 percent higher than budgeted. Our budget requests reflect these higher salary expectations for current staff and future hires to make sure that we attract and retain the best.

I really appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of our funding request and look forward to answering whatever questions that you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Rodgers follows:]

**Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Funding Request for the Committee on Energy and Commerce
Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair
March 1, 2022**

Thank you Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee.

We are grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of the Energy and Commerce Committee's funding request for the 118th Congress.

Our request reflects the anticipated needs of the Committee's majority and minority to best fulfill our Article 1 responsibilities.

A well-functioning legislative committee is the best way we exert our Article 1 powers on behalf of the people we represent.

I'm proud of E&C's rich history of plowing the hard ground to legislate, deliver results, and help make people's lives better.

Millions of Americans are depending on us to tackle today's greatest challenges, so they have the opportunity for a brighter future.

I am also grateful for the relationship I've built with Ranking Member Pallone.

It's a relationship built on trust. Trust is where the magic happens and foundational to everything we do.

Last Congress, we worked closely to maximize every penny of the Committee's budget so both the majority and minority could meet their needs.

We also worked to improve how the committee operates. For the first time in the history of Congress, we held a bipartisan Committee staff retreat.

While Frank and I disagree on many things, we always agree to be good stewards of the Committee's resources to better Energy and Commerce, the House, and deliver for taxpayers.

Our committee has hit the ground running. By March 31st, Energy and Commerce will have completed 31 committee activities – including hearings in the field and Rayburn, markups, and roundtables. The Committee has managed five rule bills on the floor, including the first open rule bill of this Congress which considered 78 amendments in real time on the floor.

In addition to supporting this fast pace to produce quality legislation, our request would give additional resources needed to increase our oversight capacity, improve member involvement, modernize how we operate, and retain high-quality staff.

There are several highlights of our funding request I'd like to share today.

First, boosting our work to conduct oversight and investigations of this administration and woke corporations under the leadership of Representative Griffith, Chairman of our Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

In addition to more staff, I have identified software to scrutinize more than \$500 billion in new spending within our jurisdiction to help expose any waste, fraud, and abuse.

I'm committed to organizing more field hearings and site visits. There's no substitute for members going outside of Washington, DC and being on the ground to hear directly from those impacted by the laws we pass. Last month, we held two field hearings in Texas which had participation from 20 members from both parties. Our ability to significantly increase these activities is simply a matter of resources.

I'm thrilled Chairman Steil established a subcommittee focused on modernization efforts. I've requested funds to work with the CAO to build software which will drastically improve our productivity and effectiveness — and hopefully become software that will help all committees. For example, the ability to create dynamic letter tracking or automate notices would significantly improve our oversight and legislative operations.

Finally, the quick and dramatic increases in the salary cap for House employees last Congress significantly changed the employee marketplace. Starting salaries for new staff in the 118th Congress is averaging 6-12% higher than budgeted. Our budget request reflects these higher salary expectations for current staff and future hires to make sure we attract and retain the best.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of our funding request. We look forward to answering any questions you may have about the important work that lies ahead.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers. Ranking Member Pallone is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Chairman Steil, and Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee, and in particular, Mr. Griffith, of course, who is a member of our committee.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed budget for the Energy and Commerce Committee for the 118th Congress. I am pleased to join committee Chairwoman Rodgers here today and thank her for seeking me and my staff's input in the preparation of the proposed budget request.

As you know, the Energy and Commerce Committee has the broadest jurisdiction of any authorizing committee in Congress. It legislates on healthcare, biomedical research, food safety, clean air, climate change, safe drinking water. The list goes on. With this broad jurisdiction, last Congress, 2,515 bills were referred to the committee, and of those, 26 measures became laws as a result of the committee's work. While that number may seem low, most measures included a compilation of dozens of bills.

In fact, the committee was extremely productive in the 117th Congress. All five of the major laws that were signed into law last Congress—the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the Fiscal Year 2023 omnibus—included key provisions from the committee.

These laws will modernize our nation's infrastructure, lower healthcare and prescription drug costs, make unprecedented investments in climate action, tackle rising inflation, and boost American manufacturing and competitiveness.

We also had major bipartisan wins to combat the mental health and substance-use disorder crisis, keep dangerous products off the market, make communication devices more secure, and ensure drugs and medical devices are safe and effective with the reauthorization of the FDA user fee program.

Now, these were major achievements that are going to make a real difference in the lives of American people, and it is now critical that we ensure these legislative achievements are being implemented by the administration as Congress intended.

Our proposed budget, which requests a 14-percent increase in funding for the committee above Fiscal Year 2023 levels, will greatly assist us in fulfilling our legislative oversight and investigatory duties over the expansive areas within our jurisdiction. The Energy and Commerce Committee has a long and proud history of bipartisan collaboration in the spirit of serving all Americans. In order to advance the committee's goal, it is critical that we retain a strong and experienced staff.

Over the last several Congresses, the institution has taken tremendous steps to increase staff pay across the board, instituting a minimum annual pay of \$45,000 for junior staffers and boosting the maximum pay for senior staffers. These pay increases are essential to attract and retain a diverse workforce that remains on

Capitol Hill. In order to keep experienced staff, we have to continue to boost staff's salaries to be competitive with federal agencies in the private sector. Otherwise, the legislative branch is at a disadvantage, a distinct disadvantage, and we simply cannot allow that to happen.

Long-time committee staff who intricately know and understand the legislative history and the laws that previous Congresses have passed are critical to ensuring that the legislative intent of these laws is known over time. This legislative history can't be underestimated and I think is vitally important for the committee and the Congress.

Staffers with investigative expertise in particular are critical to our oversight of the administration and industries within our jurisdiction. We also have to ensure that the committee staff have the tools they need to do their job. This includes access to essential technical support and subscriptions to informational resources of current affairs, policy, the law, economic trends, and technology.

I want to note that, last Congress, I made the decision to move away from an unfair and unworkable budget ratio that traditionally splits the committee budget between the majority and minority two-thirds to one-third respectively. Instead, I provided the minority with 40 percent of the total committee budget. This agreement worked well last Congress and is a more reasonable approach to the needs of both sides, in my opinion. I am pleased that Chairwoman Rodgers has committed to retaining that new split this Congress.

Chairwoman Rodgers and I will also continue to work together to reduce and consolidate our costs wherever possible and as proactively as we can while also promoting a committee culture of accountability and respect for the American taxpayer. I think the committee has a lot of work to do over the next 2 years, and I firmly believe this funding request will provide us with the resources we need to get the job done.

I just join with Chairwoman Rodgers in voicing my strong support for this budget request. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and the members of the Committee, for hearing us this morning. I appreciate it.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.
Before the Committee on House Administration on Funding for the
Committee on Energy and Commerce for the 118th Congress**

March 1, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed budget for the Energy and Commerce Committee for the 118th Congress. I am pleased to join Committee Chair Rodgers here today and thank her for seeking me and my staff's input in the preparation of this proposed budget request.

As you know, the Energy and Commerce Committee has the broadest jurisdiction of any authorizing committee in Congress. It legislates on health care; biomedical research and development; food safety; clean air and climate change; safe drinking water; national energy policy; nuclear facilities; electronic communications and the internet; privacy, cybersecurity, and data security; consumer protection and product safety; and other issues.

With this broad jurisdiction, last Congress 2,515 bills were referred to the Committee, and of those 26 measures became law as a result of the Committee's work. While that number may seem low considering, most measures included a compilation of dozens of bills.

In fact, the Committee was extremely productive in the 117th Congress. All five of the major laws that were signed into law last Congress – the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the fiscal year 2023 omnibus package – included key provisions from the Committee.

These laws will modernize our nation's crumbling infrastructure, lower health care and prescription drugs costs, make unprecedented investments in climate action, tackle rising inflation, and boost American manufacturing and competitiveness.

We also had major bipartisan wins to combat the mental health and substance use disorder crises, keep dangerous products off the market, make communications devices more secure, and ensure drugs and medical devices are safe and effective with the reauthorization of the Food and Drug Administration's user fee programs.

These were major advancements that are going to make a real difference in the lives of the American people, and it is now critical that we ensure these legislative achievements are being implemented by the Administration as Congress intended.

Our proposed budget, which requests a 14 percent increase in funding for the Committee above fiscal year 2023 levels, will greatly assist us in fulfilling our legislative, oversight, and investigatory duties over the expansive areas within our jurisdiction.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has a long and proud history of bipartisan collaboration in the spirit of serving all Americans. In order to advance the Committee's goals, it is critical that we retain a strong and experienced staff. Over the last several Congresses, the

institution has taken tremendous steps to increase staff pay across the board -- instituting minimum annual pay of \$45,000 for junior staffers and boosting the maximum pay for senior staffers.

These pay increases are essential to attract and retain a diverse workforce that remains on Capitol Hill. In order to keep experienced staff on the Hill, we must continue to boost staff salaries to be competitive with federal agencies and the private sector. Otherwise, the legislative branch is at a distinct disadvantage, and we simply cannot allow that to happen. Longtime committee staff, who intricately know and understand the legislative history of the laws that previous Congresses have passed, are critical to ensuring that the legislative intent of these laws is known over time. This legislative history cannot be underestimated and is vitally important for both the Committee and the Congress. Staffers with investigative expertise are also critical to our oversight of the Administration and our investigative efforts of industries within our jurisdiction.

We must also ensure that the Committee staff have the tools they need to do their job. This includes access to essential technical support and subscriptions to informational resources on current affairs, policy, the law, economic trends, and technology.

I would also like to note that last Congress I made the decision to move away from an unfair and unworkable budget ratio that traditionally split the Committee budget between the majority and minority two thirds to one third, respectively. Instead, I provided the minority with 40 percent of the total Committee budget. This agreement worked well last Congress and is a more reasonable approach to the needs of both sides. I am pleased that Chair Rodgers has committed to retaining the new split this Congress.

Chair Rodgers and I will also continue to work together to reduce and consolidate our costs wherever possible and as proactively as we can, while also promoting a committee culture of accountability to and respect for the American taxpayer.

The Committee has a lot of work to do over the next two years for the American people and I firmly believe this funding request will provide us the resources we need to get the job done. I join the Chair in voicing my strong support for this budget request.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Pallone. The majority and minority will now have 5 minutes each to question the witnesses.

I will take the 5 minutes and yield immediately to the esteemed member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. Griffith.

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

Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers, you talked about it a little bit in your testimony, but explain why field hearings are so important and how it is different than just doing it in Washington, DC.

Mrs. RODGERS. I think field hearings are extremely important. It makes all the difference to be able to go to a Member's district, to a state, and see firsthand what the issue may be. We saw that last week—or the week before last when we were down in McAllen, Texas, on the border focusing on fentanyl and the issues around fentanyl that is coming across the border. Then being able to go to Midland, Texas, and highlight American energy and how foundational American energy is. To have Republicans and Democrats join in these field hearings, see together, to hear the stories and see firsthand makes all the difference.

Mr. GRIFFITH. It is not just that the field hearing is in a different location, it is that, on top of the hearing, you can also go and visit sites like we did when we were in McAllen. Is that correct?

Mrs. RODGERS. For sure, yes. We were able to go—yes. You don't just have the hearing. We were able to go down to the Rio Grande River after the hearing late at night and be able to see the activity at the river in real time. It makes all the difference, and I think it is an extremely valuable piece.

We would like to do a lot more field hearings. The reality is, they also cost a lot more money because you are taking on a lot more expense around the travel and just beyond here.

Mr. GRIFFITH. You believe that is money well spent to educate the Members of Congress both on the Republican side and the Democratic side?

Mrs. RODGERS. For sure. No doubt about it.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Absolutely. Now, you also talked about—

Mr. PALLONE [continuing]. if you would yield to me.

In the last Congress when I was the Chair, I was—because of the cost, I was reluctant, as you know, to have field hearings because I just thought we didn't have enough money. I mean, there is no way to do—

Mr. GRIFFITH. You also had to deal with the COVID issues?

Mr. PALLONE. What was that?

Mr. GRIFFITH. You had to also deal with the COVID issues, which made travel difficult.

Mr. PALLONE. Yes, I guess you are right about that. I hadn't thought about that.

What I am saying is that I knew that we were going to have a hard time doing field hearings because of the lack of funding. I just totally agree with Chairwoman Rodgers that, if we are going to be able to do more field hearings, which I think are important, we are going to need more money; otherwise, we are not going to be able to do them.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Right.

Now, you also mentioned in your testimony, Chairwoman Rodgers, that you wanted to be able to try to track the 500 billion in new spending that is under our committee's jurisdiction, and you were going to work on the modernization side to get the software that is right and so forth, but that costs money as well.

Can you elaborate on what the committee has identified so far and what level of assistance you are looking for from the CAO to provide help in this endeavor?

Mrs. RODGERS. Yes. Yes. Well, it is—we are talking half a trillion dollars that we have identified of new spending within this committee's jurisdiction. It is energy and climate, new spending around energy and climate, public health. We are going to be at the forefront of pandemic preparedness, as well as asking the—doing the review of the response to COVID and how we prepare for the next pandemic. Big Tech, and also the record-breaking investment in closing the digital divide in broadband spending. That is all part of that \$500 billion. Having the staff as well as the software necessary, I think, is critical. Obviously, that is—it is a lot of money.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Let me shift to staff.

Mrs. RODGERS. Okay.

Mr. GRIFFITH. In order to be able to track all of that, the committee is going to need additional staff to help out, say, on oversight because, already, we are doing numerous letters trying to track that money, but the letters just don't magically appear. It takes staff to help draft them and then Members to go over them and so forth. Isn't that correct?

Mrs. RODGERS. Yes. We have some extraordinary staff with expertise that have been a part of the oversight and investigation subcommittee. The reality is, with this additional—especially with the additional spending and so many agencies and boards and commissions that have more spending, it takes a staff to do the follow up and to really understanding the details and be able to ask the questions and make sure that we are holding them accountable.

Mr. GRIFFITH. It is my understanding—either one of you can answer this. It is my understanding that, at one point in time, when Chairman Dingle was Chairman of the oversight and investigation subcommittee of Energy and Commerce, he had over 100 people working on oversight.

Is that something that you—I see staffers saying that is right, but do you all recall that?

Mr. Pallone, do you recall—Ranking Member Pallone, do you recall?

Mr. PALLONE. Absolutely. I mean, maybe you don't remember, but I do. I mean, the majority of the work of the committee at that point was oversight.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes. Your request might be a little shy on the number of people needed.

Mrs. RODGERS. It sounds like it. I think I need to amend our request here.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I appreciate it.

I yield back to the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I am not going to ask what year Mr. Dingle was Chair of a subcommittee at Energy and Commerce.

I now take 5 minutes to yield to Mr. Morelle.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH MORELLE, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW YORK, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will say the comment by Mr. Griffith was spoken like a true member of the Energy and Commerce Committee in terms of increased allocations.

I do want to—I appreciate everyone being here, Chair McMorris Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone. I do think just as—I will say this public service announcement. I think the staff here are amazing in the House. I don't think there are enough of them to support the incredible work we have to do. I know people are always conscious about spending money and taxpayers' dollars, but to get real value out of the Congress, I agree with you, Mr. Griffith. I think we should all be thoughtful about how—that is what you are saying—I think you said. I want to agree with you.

Thank you both for being here. Thanks for your incredible work in a committee that is clearly critically important to the House.

I want to, if I can, Mr. Pallone, I do want to commend you for your leadership as Chair in addressing the inadequacy of the split between the majority and minority. I think it was very commendable. I think—you know, just to casual observers outside of Congress, I think they would agree that the one-third/two-third split—I think people would just intuitively say it doesn't seem fair considering the ratios of the committee or the full House. In practice, a deep discrepancy makes it hard for the two sides to operate appropriately and frankly to cooperate, which is what we would like to see more of. Bipartisan cooperation on as many issues as we can.

I understand that is not the only limitation on the funding split. I appreciate certainly the Chair agreeing to the old 60/40 split. I wanted to just ask you, is it true that the committee—the total amount of the staff slots is part of the issue here. It is not only the allocation, 60/40, which you have agreed to. The 2–1 split makes it hard to actually have the 60/40 materialize. Could you just comment on your perspective on that, Mr. Pallone?

Mr. PALLONE. Yes. As you suggest—but maybe I should make it clear if you don't know, though you probably do—that, you know, the budget is one thing, and the idea of the two-thirds/one-third is not set in rule or regulation, right? In other words, Chairwoman Rodgers can say: Okay, I have this budget. You know, I will do 60 percent, and you, Ranking Member Pallone, can do 40.

She can decide that, right? The two-thirds/one-third is just custom. Do you know what I mean? We can change it, which we did when I was Chair, and she has agreed to do in this Congress. The same is true for the slots, right? In other words—

Mr. MORELLE. Yes. Just in terms of clarification for anybody who might be paying attention, it is that the dollars are allocated 60/40, but the slots, which are—

Mr. PALLONE. Well, it is similar. It is similar, Mr. Morelle, in the sense that, if you don't increase the number of slots the way you increase the overall budget, then she doesn't really have the ability to do a 60/40 split with the slots either. Do you know what I am saying?

In other words, the problem is that you have increased the budget over the years, but you haven't increased the slots. We have

money that we can't reallocate based on the slots. She could say to me, "Okay, we are going to do the slots 60/40," but if she doesn't have an increase in the number of slots, then she, practically speaking, can't do that because there is only so many slots.

What we are basically saying is that we would like you to increase the slots at the same level that our budget increases this year. We would ask that the Committee add an additional 12 slots, bringing the new total to 134. Then she could split those slots in proportion, 60/40, if she desires or if we agree to do that. Otherwise, she has more money, but she can't give me more slots because she has got work to do, and she can't just say, "Okay, I am going to give you more slots," because then she won't have more slots. Does that make sense?

Mr. MORELLE. Yes, it does and I feel bad. I probably should have asked you, Madam Chair, first because we are talking about you like you are not in the room.

Would you comment on that your perspective as well?

Mrs. RODGERS. Well, I am very much a fiscal conservative. To my Republican colleagues, I would just appeal to you that it takes—in order for us to fulfill our Article I responsibilities of oversight and exercising the power of the purse and holding the administration, Article II, all of the spending within the federal government for us—in order for us to be effective, we have to have the people.

Consider how much spending—we are talking money. It is also a lot of people within the federal government, boards, agencies, commissions. For us to be able to fulfill our responsibilities, we have to have the people to be able to do it.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. I thank the Chair and the Ranking Member for joining us today. Your testimony is really helpful in regards to our markup next week. We are keeping this brief and quick today, but we appreciate your time here and your commitment to joining us in returning the House to regular order and transparency to our taxpayers. Have a wonderful day.

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Gallagher, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, thank you for joining us today. This is our commitment to returning the House to regular order and providing transparency to taxpayers. You will each be given 5 minutes for an opening statement. There will be 5 minutes of questioning in total, 5 from the majority, 5 from the minority, to question the witnesses.

To keep us going, I am going to yield immediately to Chairman Gallagher for 5 minutes for the purposes of an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MIKE GALLAGHER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you, Chairman Steil.

Thank you, Ranking Member Morelle.

Thank you for inviting us to testify here today in terms of the budget for the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party in the 118th Congress.

We had our first hearing last night, and it was a very bipartisan event, and we are off to a good start. Of course, we need resources to proceed. My partner on our committee Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi and I are both aware of the current constrained budget environment we face. Therefore, the work we do must be efficient and effective. We need to be efficient and effective with taxpayer money that you provide to us.

As you will see in our submitted budget documentation, this budget would build and resource the entirety of the select committee from scratch. This includes salaries for 24 majority staffers and 12 minority staffers, as well as planning for and traveling to approximately four field hearings each year.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi and I are aware of the challenge facing our committee. The Chinese Communist Party poses a serious and highly complex threat to the future of the United States. I would argue that this competition, this fight, is existential. In all areas of geopolitical competition, be it military, be it economic, be it diplomatic, the CCP is working to undermine our national interest.

With the resources provided to this committee, the committee will work to, one, restore supply chains and end critical economic dependencies on China; two, strengthen the military to build a credible deterrent to prevent conflict; and, three, end the CCP's theft of American personal data and intellectual property; and, four, work to address the human rights violations committed at the hands of the CCP; and, finally, five, make a compelling argument to the American people that the CCP's techno-totalitarian state is a danger to the values of the free world, among other important work we must do.

This, as you can tell, is no small task. Our committee will play a central role in driving China policy in Congress and working with the standing committees of jurisdiction to do so. My staff and I are committed to delivering actionable policy recommendations that will safeguard U.S. national interests and reduce the threat of the Chinese Communist Party.

Please accept my thanks for your time and your consideration of the committee's request. I yield back my 2 minutes and 53 seconds.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gallagher follows:]

**Testimony of Chairman Mike Gallagher Before
the Committee on House Administration
March 1, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle. Thank you for inviting me to testify before the Committee on House Administration on the budget request for the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party in the 118th Congress.

My partner on our committee, Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi, and I are both aware of the current constrained budget environment we face. The work we do must be efficient and effective with the taxpayer money provided to us. As you will see in our submitted budget documentation, this budget would build and resource the entirety of the Select Committee from scratch. This includes salaries for 24 majority staffers and 12 minority staffers, as well as planning for and traveling to approximately four field hearings each year.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi and I are aware of the challenge facing our committee. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) poses a serious and highly complex threat to the future of the United States. I would argue our fight is existential. In all areas of geopolitical competition—be it military, economic, or diplomatic—the CCP is working to undermine our national interests. With the resources provided to this

committee, the committee will work to (1) restore supply chains and end critical economic dependencies on China, (2) strengthen the military to build a credible deterrent to prevent conflict, (3) end the CCP's theft of American personal data and intellectual property, (4) work to address the human rights violations committed at the hands of the CCP, and (5) make a compelling argument to the American people that the CCP's techno-totalitarian state is a danger to the values of the Free World, among other important work.

This is no small task. Our committee will play a central role in driving China policy in Congress and working with the standing committees of jurisdiction to do so. My staff and I are committed to delivering actionable policy recommendations that will safeguard U.S. national interests and reduce the threat of the CCP.

Please accept my thanks for your time and your consideration of the committee's request.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Gallagher.
I now yield 5 minutes to the Ranking Member, Mr. Krishnamoorthi, for the purposes of an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party and our budget submissions for the 118th Congress.

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Mike Gallagher for his leadership as well as his collaboration. We are trying to create a genuinely bipartisan effort, and I think last night illustrated that. We have been working very closely with the majority staff on a number of issues, including this budget. As you know, we are starting from zero. We are building from scratch, from ground up.

As we work together to meet the challenges posed to this committee, I am very pleased to join Chairman Gallagher in supporting this funding request. Of course, as you know, the challenges that we are trying to deal with are pretty serious. The CCP poses major economic and security threats to our Nation as well as to democracy and prosperity around the world.

Those dangers are clearly illustrated by the CCP's threats against Taiwan's democracy, its theft of hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of American intellectual property, and its numerous human rights abuses, including transnational repression of people here in the United States who have the temerity to advocate against, for instance, the genocide against Uyghur people in the People's Republic of China.

Using the resources provided to this committee, we will study and develop the policy tools we need to protect our Nation and outcompete the PRC through developing our high-tech and manufacturing sectors, upscaling our workforce, strengthening strategic cooperation with our partners across the Indo-Pacific region, and countering the CCP's antimarket policies that hurt American workers.

We will pursue this agenda while rejecting the dangers of xenophobia, suspicion, and division in America, which the CCP not only welcomes but also actively works to sow in our society. The tasks before this committee are significant, but Chairman Gallagher and I know that the budget that we have proposed will enable our committee to deliver the actionable policy recommendations necessary to ensure the security and prosperity of our nation in the face of serious threats from the CCP.

Thank you, again, for your time and consideration of our committee's request. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Krishnamoorthi follows:]

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi
The Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the
Chinese Communist Party Budget Request for the 118th Congress
March 1, 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 Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party's budget submissions for the 118th Congress.

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Mike Gallagher for his leadership in developing our Committee budget, as well as his staff who worked closely with mine in this effort. That is no small undertaking because, as the Chairman noted, we need to build out our committee from the ground up. As we work together to meet the challenges posed to this committee, I am pleased to join Chairman Gallagher in supporting this funding request. And those challenges are serious.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) poses major economic and security threats to our nation as well as to democracy and prosperity across the globe. Those dangers are clearly illustrated by the CCP's threats against Taiwan's democracy, its theft of hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of American intellectual property, and its numerous human rights abuses. Using the resources provided to this committee, we will study and develop the policy tools we need to protect our nation and out-compete China through developing our high technology and manufacturing sectors, up-skilling our workforce, strengthening strategic cooperation with our partners across the Indo-Pacific, including Taiwan, and countering the CCP's anti-market policies that hurt American workers.

We will pursue this agenda while rejecting the dangers of xenophobia, suspicion, and division in America which the CCP not only welcomes, but also actively works to sow.

The tasks before this committee are significant but Chairman Gallagher and I know that the budget that we have proposed will enable our committee to deliver the actionable policy recommendations necessary to help ensure the security and prosperity of our nation in the face of the threats posed by the CCP.

Thank you for our time and consideration of our committee's request.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

The Chair and Ranking Member will now each control 5 minutes for the purpose of asking questions. I will start with myself.

Mr. Gallagher, you are starting off with a new committee. Last Congress, I was the Ranking Member on a select committee with then Chairman Himes on Economic Disparity and Fairness and Growth. You are the only committee that has a reduction in budget in the second year. I think in large part that stems from the fact that you are really standing up and creating a new select committee that has never existed before in the House.

I want to dive into some of the challenges you face, in particular on the recruitment of staff. Where many committees come in, they already have a standing staff; they are coming into kind of a rotation period. You are building this out of scratch. Can you kind of comment on what the challenges are you are facing? Because there has got to be really specific areas of expertise that you need regarding supply chain, intelligence, et cetera.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, first, Mr. Chairman, let me say how grateful I am that you were willing to sit down with me from the start and just talk about lessons learned in running a select committee. It is not easy, particularly when you are dealing with an issue that transcends really every standing committee's jurisdiction. I really appreciate that. Your staff has also been phenomenal in working with both of our staffs in order to make sure that we are able to build the plane as we are flying it.

The challenges range from the highly mundane and practical of where do we actually conduct our business, where does our staff work—you have been great in accommodating that space—to the how do we get equipment on the cheap. We tried to be very efficient in actually taking old equipment from a previous select committee that operated in the last Congress.

To your comment on staff, obviously we need to balance two things that reflect really our two core functions. One is we want to be the Speaker and minority leader's policy incubator and accelerator for smart, strong, bipartisan China-related legislation in this Congress. The second, because we don't have unique legislative jurisdiction and in some ways more difficult and more important, is we want to have a strong communications function. We want to communicate to our colleagues and the American people why they should care about the threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party and why this is a threat that affects all Americans.

We have benefited from a lot of expertise that has come from other committees, but you are right. We are having to recruit a lot of people with highly technical, highly specialized knowledge.

The final thing I would say is, on the economic component of this competition, in my mind, that is the most complex. I know we all deal with it. You are on the Financial Services Committee. Finding really talented people that can understand how we derisk our supply chains from China, how we put in place adequate safeguards for American capital going to China, that is hard. It is not cheap. You need really talented, experienced people.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that. I think this is going to be an ongoing dialog this Congress. I think it is really important that we

get this right. You have an incredibly important area of jurisdiction here as we work, in particular, on the supply chain side.

I think one of the challenges we see with some of our select committees in particular on the hiring of really critical and thoughtful staff is that the duration of time that you can offer employment is 2 years. It is a little different than some of our other more traditional standing committees. Although maybe if somebody is an employee at will, there is a likelihood that individual, if proven productive, is going to be able to maintain a longer period of time and have a career. I think it is one of the challenges we face with our select committees where that term of service has a specific end date, and sometimes it is harder to recruit really talented people into that.

One of the things I would like to just encourage you is to continue that dialog in particular with this committee where we can be helpful as you are looking to operate and get stood up. Because getting your committee stood up, operational out of the gates I think is going to be essential to the success of this Congress in making sure that we are dealing with the strategic threat posed by the Communist Party of China.

I will reserve the balance of my time, and I will yield 5 minutes to the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle.

Mr. MORELLE. Thanks so much, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Gallagher and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, thank you for being here. Thanks for your good work as you begin to address a clearly strategic threat to the United States.

I was at an event back home the other day and said what I often say, which is I am not sure at any time in American history our economic security and national security are more completely aligned than they are today. The work you have to do and the work in front of you is important.

It is also important, in my view, that to the greatest degree possible, Congress speak with a single voice on the world stage, internationally, as well as to the American public about the threats we face. I appreciate your work. I have very few questions. We are moving this along pretty quickly.

One I do want to ask relative to the distribution of resources, and this will be directed to you, Mr. Chair. I want to just get assurances that, when it comes to the minority in terms of their allocation, that they will be unimpeded in their desire to spend the resources that they have without any interference from the majority. I would ask for your commitment to that.

Mr. GALLAGHER. You have my assurance on that, Ranking Member Morelle. I appreciate that. I hope in our early going that you would hear from the Ranking Member that we have been fully transparent and above board. There was a request for additional resources in terms of staffing on the minority side that we tried to accommodate. We have also shared some of our IT resources. We are going to look for efficiencies.

You know, we are not naive enough to believe that we are going to agree 100 percent on everything when it comes to the strategic competition with China, but we are looking to identify, you know, what is the 75 percent that Congress can speak with one voice on?

What is that 75 percent of the world can support? I think we will reflect that in our daily practice and how we allocate resources.

Mr. MORELLE. I don't know if the Ranking Member wanted to comment on that relationship as well.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Yes. It has been terrific. Thank you for asking about that, Ranking Member Morelle. You know, I think that Chairman Gallagher and his staff have been a pleasure to work with and have really tried to—you know, we started just a little bit later than—

The CHAIRMAN. I don't believe your mike is on. We can hear you fine, but I don't believe anybody on the live feed will be able to hear you.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Sorry. The Chinese could hear, I am sure.

Mr. GALLAGHER. The tens of viewers.

The CHAIRMAN. Don't underestimate the Committee on House Administration, Chairman Gallagher, particularly before the mark-up on the budget.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Strike the last word.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Strike the last word.

No, but just one other point that makes our hiring slightly more technically complicated is I think both of us are trying to hire Mandarin speakers as well so that people can be able to read the original text of what the CCP actually issues. We want to be as insightful as possible for you, the members of this committee, but also our colleagues and try to put before them the very best information we can from original sources. That kind of complicates the hiring as well.

Mr. MORELLE. I appreciate that. I would just also join with the Chair in offering our support as you go through this important journey and your important work.

With that, I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Gallagher, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, thanks for joining us today. This is our commitment to returning the House to regular order and providing transparency to the American people. Congratulations on your hearing last night. We look forward to big things from the select committee this year. Thank you, and have a great day.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Thompson, thank you for joining us here today. Thanks for joining our commitment to returning to regular order and restoring transparency to the American people. We are giving our witnesses 5 minutes to make an opening statement. The majority and minority will each then have 5 minutes to ask questions regarding the budget requests.

I will jump right in and yield 5 minutes to your opening statement. Thanks for joining us, Mr. Thompson.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GLENN "G.T." THOMPSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Chairman, thank you so much. Good morning, Chairman Steil, and Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee.

First of all, I would like to just—my Ranking Member sends his apologies. He is not able to make it. I would like to ask unanimous consent to be able to submit for the record his written testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Mr. David Scott of Georgia follows:]

**Opening Statement of Agriculture Committee Ranking Member David Scott
Hearing on 118th Congress Committee Funding Resolutions before the House
Committee on Administration
February 28, 2023**

Chairman Steil (“Stile”) and Ranking Member Morelle (MORE-ellie), thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present, with my good friend and Chairman, GT Thompson, the House Committee on Agriculture’s funding request for the 118th Congress.

I stand with my colleague to request a 10% increase in funding. Our funding level would be closer to \$7.5 million if we had increases based on inflation since 2007 instead we are a \$1 million behind that and that means that we are running our committee on less money than we were 20 years ago, despite increased costs across the board.

As we look to start drafting the farm bill, funding for staff as well as potential Committee travel will be vital to allowing us to hear from constituents at listening sessions in the field, sending staff to meetings with various constituency groups, and ensuring that we have enough top quality staff to work with our farmers in the countryside.

I can not overstate the importance of getting a farm bill done this year, which will require an all hands on deck approach for our committee. In terms of educating new members and personal office staff, I have 11 freshman on my side that will need detailed information provided to them to ensure they understand the importance of a strong agricultural safety net, and getting the actual drafting done.

We are always competing with private sector salaries in terms of keeping our staff, but on the Democratic side, I am also facing competition from the Biden Administration as well as the Senate Agriculture Committee who want to hire away our wonderful Agriculture Committee staff.

Being able to adequately compensate our staff will help with our efforts to keep existing staff. It is also vital to have any chance to recruit new staff from the private sector, who are all generally paid at a higher level than what we can afford in the House.

I and my predecessor strove to diversify our staff and will continue to strive to have our staff reflect the diversity of America.

I am pleased that the Agriculture Committee continues to operate on a bipartisan basis in our operations and split our resources by 2/3 to 1/3 as has historically been done. We share have a bipartisan Clerk, Financial Administrator, and IT Staff.

Our farmers have been through many pandemic and conflict related supply chain issues and they need to know that Congress supports them. Colleagues we have a very good opportunity to show that support and have a high quality bipartisan farm bill if given the necessary increase in funding to ensure we have the tools to get it completed on time, and provide necessary stability to our farmers and ranchers to keep feeding America.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I appreciate that. Thank you for inviting Ranking Member Scott and I here to share the Committee on Agriculture's bipartisan proposed budget for the 118th Congress.

As Chairman, I commit to ensuring this committee maintains its storied history of an effective and financially responsible body. The approaching expiration of the farm bill legislation impacts the Nation's entire agriculture value chain, and, quite frankly, our communities across the country, rural and urban alike, requires our shared prioritization.

As many of you know, farm bills require tremendous effort every 5 years. Ongoing impacts related to supply chains, the crisis in Ukraine, and fluctuation of commodity prices and input costs further complicate our work. For Members, staff, and stakeholders, education to policy development, our immediate agenda impacts every Member of this chamber. This task and backdrop is our chief motivation in requesting additional resources.

Personnel is imperative to our preparation and execution of hearings, listening sessions, roundtables, program audits and accounting, legislative drafting, and economic modeling and forecasting. We also need resources for extensive travel, including at least six bipartisan farm bill listening sessions across the country, among other activities outside of D.C.

Additionally, there are more multiple reauthorizations and legislative priorities outside of the farm bill that require dedicated staff, not to mention a heightened workload due to pandemic-related packages and their outstanding implementation. Each intensify the committee's mandate to protect and serve rural America and consumers across the globe, and each require extensive travel outside of Washington, DC, to hear from the individuals impacted by every decision we make, from farm to nutrition, research to rural development.

As shared in the Committee's questionnaire, we are seeking a 10 percent increase for staff salaries and related activities. These additional resources will allow both the majority and minority to attract, maintain, and reward staff, something of extreme importance to both of us. The institutional knowledge of the committee and its members relies heavily on the expertise, education, and diversity of the staff serving it.

Unfortunately, the committee budgets have yet to recover from decreasing between 2012 and 2016, but they also have not kept pace with outsized inflation, both of which continue to plague our ability to attract and retain highly specialized employees. Frankly, we are not able to compete with the executive branch or the private sector and struggle to retain staff.

We certainly have a lofty agenda ahead, and we will work tirelessly to enact that agenda with tenacity and financial responsibility. We appreciate your consideration of this request. I am happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thompson of Pennsylvania follows:]

CHAIRMAN GLENN "GT" THOMPSON
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting Ranking Member Scott and me to share the Committee on Agriculture's bipartisan, proposed budget for the 118th Congress. As Chairman, I commit to ensuring the Committee maintains its storied history as an effective and financially responsible body.

The approaching expiration of the Farm Bill—legislation impacting the nation's entire agriculture value chain and communities across the country rural and urban alike—requires our shared prioritization.

As many of you know, Farm Bills require a tremendous effort every five years. Ongoing impacts related to supply chains, the crisis in Ukraine, and fluctuations in commodity prices and input costs further complicate our work. From Member, staff, and stakeholder education to policy development, our immediate agenda impacts every Member of this chamber. This task and backdrop is our chief motivation in requesting additional resources.

Personnel is imperative to our preparation and execution of hearings, listening sessions, roundtables, program audits and accounting, legislative drafting, and economic modeling and forecasting. We also need resources for extensive travel, including at least six bipartisan farm bill listening sessions across the country, among other activities outside of D.C.

Additionally, there are multiple reauthorizations and legislative priorities outside of the Farm Bill that require dedicated staff. Not to mention a heightened workload due to pandemic related packages and their outstanding implementation. Each intensify the Committee's mandate to protect and serve rural America and consumers across the globe. And each require extensive travel outside of Washington, D.C. to hear from the individuals impacted by every decision we make, from farm to nutrition, research to rural development.

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Unfortunately, Committee budgets have yet to recover from decreases between 2012 and 2016, and they also have not kept pace with outsized inflation, both of which continue to plague our ability to attract and retain highly specialized employees.

Frankly, we are not able to compete with the Executive Branch or the private sector and struggle to retain staff.

We certainly have a lofty agenda ahead and will work tirelessly to enact that agenda with tenacity and fiscal responsibility. We appreciate your consideration of this request, and I am happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chairman Thompson.

The majority and minority will each now have 5 minutes for questions. I will begin with the majority's time.

Uniquely, this year, the farm bill comes up. It is once every 5 years. It has got to be a pretty different year in your committee. The funding request is actually only up 5 percent over the previous year. This is where a lot of the action takes place in your committee.

Could you kind of just walk through how this is going to be different from a funding perspective for this year? Or do you view that steady state as being appropriate?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. No. Actually, an increase is warranted when you look at—well, the baseline of—there was an announcement today of, you know—and this tends to happen, but the timing could have been unfortunate for Mr. Scott having, I think, a number of staff who are seeking greater opportunity in the executive branch. I am not sure—maybe somebody is going downtown. I am not sure everywhere they are going, but I know the USDA was one of those places. That tends to occur from time to time. That is kind of the baseline of what we are doing.

Then you look at the farm bill year where you need the expertise. We need to bring in talented folks. We need economists, you know, to be able to look at the economics, short term and long term, on the policies that we put forward. And that is an expertise we have to invest in.

When you look at the need—and we have always traditionally done this. It is not something new. In addition to doing intense hearings here in Washington, we are doing farm bill listening sessions, which is a fairly efficient way of achieving things versus a, you know, formal hearing. It is getting the voices from across rural America. We have always done those. As I said in my testimony I presented, we are looking at the need for at least six of those. It needs to be regional around the country because agriculture, where it shares a lot of things in common, quite frankly, there are a lot of differences regionally. We need to be able to represent that as we work on this—you know, this language that will be—that will serve not just our communities and those who—I like to phrase it this way: those who produce, those who process, and those who consume. That would be everybody, you know, across this country.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Never shortchange yourself on dairy expert as we go into the farm bill year.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Amen.

The CHAIRMAN. If I can go from the big picture into a little bit on the mundane, I know, inside your budget, you have around \$140,000 for subscriptions for both sessions. One of the things that this Committee is going to be committed to this cycle is looking for ways to save taxpayers' money and where we have a lot of committees engaged in subscription services and other committees doing it separately, looking for kind of an economy of scale. Does anything jump out to you in particular that you may benefit that other committees are engaged in a similar manner?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Yes, it is—I mean, the subscriptions are incredibly important, right? That allows us to be able to respond to the issues immediately as things come across our desk.

We do appreciate—I believe it is the Enterprise subscription system, which provides a lot of different resources. There are two in particular that fall outside of that, if that could be encompassed: the Bloomberg BGov and POLITICO Pro. In the scope of what we do with our committee, it would be very helpful to have that.

You know, these subscriptions—it is challenging. It seems like there is a difference of what committees have to pay for compared to a Member's office. Those two in particular certainly stand out.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. That is something this committee is going to look into. I appreciate your testimony.

I will now yield 5 minutes to be controlled by the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle.

Mr. MORELLE. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Nice to have you here. I agree that the incredibly important work of the Agriculture Committee grows even larger when you have the farm bill to consider. I appreciate all the hard work you have to do.

I come from Upstate New York. I noticed you are having a field hearing in New York. I don't know where, but I hope it is Upstate. I remind people all the time, and they may find this surprising, that depending how you sort of measure it, agriculture is either the No. 1 or two industry in New York State.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. That is right.

Mr. MORELLE. Which I don't think people often think of us as an agricultural state, but we are. My region is certainly right in the center of that agricultural activity. I appreciate your hard work.

I just want to quickly, in addition to putting a plug for Upstate New York as part of your field hearing, want to—you had indicated in your written submission to us that you would follow the practice of not impeding in any way the minority's ability to spend their allocation. I assume that you are going to be committed to that rule?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Yes, absolutely. We are very blessed to have just a long-term, great working relationship with Ranking Member Scott. The allocations would be—and this is a bipartisan proposal. It is basically on precedent of what we have done.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good. I am going to take my cue from the Chair and just ask for a much more mundane question, which is, in the last Congress—I know we created a process by which field hearings would be conducted where we bring in things like the Sergeant at Arms, Capitol Police, the Clerk's Office, all sort of coordinated together to help reduce the cost of those hearings. Is that the process you expect to use when you are conducting your field hearings?

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Yes. We want to do it in a very efficient way, obviously, as we are planning laying these out, that are strongly bipartisan. We basically want to replicate what we did in past farm bills and specifically in the 2018 farm bill, which was highly effective, bringing the voices of American agriculture to the table so that they have a voice at the table as we prepare this bill.

Mr. MORELLE. Alright. Thank you, again, for your hard work, for your work with the Ranking Member, and I wish you all the very best.

With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Thompson, thanks for being here today. You have got a big year ahead of you with the farm bill. We appreciate all the work that you are doing and all the work that you are about to do on behalf of all of America's farmers. If we are making pitches for field hearings, keep Wisconsin in mind.

In serious sense, we appreciate your time here today and your commitment to reestablishing regular order and transparency to taxpayers. Have a wonderful day.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Alright. Very good. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman McHenry, Ranking Member Waters, thanks for joining us today. This is our commitment to restoring regular order to the people's House and transparency to America's taxpayers. We are going to move along pretty quickly. We will give each of you 5 minutes for an opening statement, then myself and the Ranking Member will each control 5 minutes to ask questions of the witnesses. We appreciate you being here.

Without ado, I will yield to Chairman McHenry for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. PATRICK T. MCHENRY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. MCHENRY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee. I am very glad to see one, two, and a third member of the Financial Services Committee on this committee and good friends and colleagues across the board. I appreciate you giving Ranking Member Waters and I the opportunity to present our budget request for the Financial Services Committee.

We are at a pivotal moment for our financial system and the economy as a whole. Ranking Member Waters and I worked together to develop a thoughtful request that reflects this reality and allows us to deliver on the critical work we will undertake this Congress.

We are requesting a 5-percent increase for the 118th Congress. This request is based on our massive workload that focuses on issues that directly impact all of our constituents. We have provided specific details about how these additional resources will be utilized in our written documents. I would like to briefly walk you through a few examples that highlight why this additional funding is so important.

Too many Americans feel unheard and cutoff from the legislative process. Field hearings give us the opportunity to meet our constituents where they are and help show Members the unique needs of different regions of the country. They require time and money from travel, which is more expensive now, and lodging, which is more expensive now, to research, materials, and production. It is my goal for each of our six subcommittees to conduct a field hearing to hear the diverse viewpoints across the U.S. using the new funding.

Next is staff. Hiring and retaining talented staff to work on behalf of our constituents requires paying them a decent wage. We know rampant inflation has made the cost of everything rise, including wages and labor. Additionally, changes to the rules gov-

erning staff pay that were put in place last Congress put further pressure on wage inflation for congressional employees. Job creators in the private sector have been reeling from these challenges, and the House is no different.

In light of this inflationary environment, a 5-percent budget increase to cover staff salaries alone is a very modest request. I would also like to discuss the pressing issues I intend to address this year and how this increased funding would help the committee achieve its objectives.

Advances in technology have benefited consumers, but they have also created gaps in our consumer financial data privacy laws. We must modernize and strengthen our existing protections to ensure consumers control their data. Last night, the committee considered my Data Privacy Act to do just that.

The second pressing issue is enhancing capital formation opportunities just as we did a little over a decade ago with the bipartisan JOBS act. It is my hope that we can build on the successes of the JOBS act to deliver the type of growth that has proven enduring. That was a bipartisan bill, and my hope is we can have a similar bipartisan package this Congress.

Finally, digital assets. Americans have lost billions of dollars in digital assets due to bad actors. This technology also has the potential to bring more Americans into the financial system and hold the promise of the next building blocks for the future internet.

It is our job as legislators to provide clear rules of the road for this technology to protect consumers while allowing innovation to thrive here in the United States. I think we can achieve that balance, which is why I created a Subcommittee on Digital Assets Chaired by Congressman Hill of Arkansas. Digital assets are a new technology. Bringing regulatory reform to these assets will require extensive education of Members and staff alike, not just on the committee but off the committee as well, as well as a great deal of oversight of this marketplace. Both of these priorities require us to have the staff expertise and educational resources necessary to make solid public policy.

Republicans will also return the committee's attention to responsible but rigorous oversight of the executive branch. Oversight and investigations require a great deal of resources, including hiring top-notch oversight attorneys and the software like Clearwell that is needed to process and analyze enormous document productions.

Let me conclude with this. The next 2 years of policy will set the terms of debate for the next decade in the Financial Services Committee. The Financial Services Committee is ready with solutions to foster innovation and create economic opportunities for all Americans, but we need the resources to deliver.

With that, I am happy to answer questions. I would like to thank the Ranking Member. Just as she reached out in the two previous Congresses when I was Ranking Member to make sure that we have a similar budget request and we have alignment before the House Administration Committee, I am grateful that she reciprocated in that relationship as well.

Thank you to the Committee members, and I am happy to answer your questions. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McHenry follows:]

PATRICK McHENRY, NC
CHAIRMANMAXINE WATERS, CA
RANKING MEMBERUnited States House of Representatives
One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rasmus House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515**Testimony of Chairman Patrick McHenry, Committee on Financial Services**

Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate you giving Ranking Member Waters and I the chance to present our budget request for the Financial Services Committee.

We are at a pivotal moment for our financial system and the economy as a whole. Ranking Member Waters and I worked together to develop a thoughtful request that reflects this reality and allows us to deliver on the critical work we will undertake this Congress.

We are requesting a 5% increase for the 118th Congress. This request is based on our massive workload that focuses on the issues that directly impact all of our constituents. We have provided specific details about how these additional resources would be utilized in our written documents. I would like to briefly walk you through a few examples that highlight why this additional funding is so important.

Too many Americans feel unheard and cut off from the legislative process. Field hearings give us the opportunity to meet our constituents where they are and help show Members the unique needs of different regions of the country. But they require time and money—from travel and lodging to research, materials, and production. It's my goal for each of our six subcommittees to conduct a field hearing to hear the diverse viewpoints across the U.S. using this new funding.

Next is staff. Hiring and retaining talented staff to work on behalf of our constituents requires paying them a decent wage. We know rampant inflation has made the cost of everything rise, including wages and labor. Additionally, changes to the rules governing staff pay that were put in place last Congress put further pressure on wage inflation in Congress. Job creators in the private sector have been reeling from these challenges and the House is no different. In light of this inflationary environment, a 5% budget increase to cover staff salaries alone is a very modest request.

I'd also like to discuss the pressing issues I intend to address this year and how this increased funding would help the Committee achieve its objectives.

Advances in technology have benefited consumers but they've also created gaps in our consumer financial data privacy laws. We must modernize and strengthen existing protections to ensure consumers control their data. Last night, the Committee considered my Data Privacy Act to do just that.

The second pressing issue is enhancing capital formation opportunities, just as we did a little over a decade ago with the bipartisan JOBS Act. It is my hope we can build on the success of the JOBS Act to deliver the type of growth that has proven enduring.

Finally, digital assets. Americans have lost billions of dollars in digital assets to bad actors. This technology also has the potential to bring more Americans into our financial system and holds promise as the building blocks of the next generation of the internet. It's our job as legislators to provide clear rules of the road for this technology to protect consumers, while allowing innovation to thrive here in the U.S. I think we can achieve that balance, which is why I created a subcommittee on digital assets, chaired by Congressman Hill.

Digital Assets are a new technology. Bringing regulatory form to these assets will require extensive education of members and staff alike. It will also require a great deal of oversight over this marketplace. Both of these priorities require us to have the staff expertise and educational resources that necessitate our budget request.

Republicans will also return the Committee's attention to responsible, but rigorous oversight of the executive branch. Oversight and Investigations require a great deal of resources, including hiring top notch oversight attorneys and the software, like Clearwell, needed to process and analyze enormous document productions.

Let me conclude with this. The next two years of policy will set the terms of debate for the next decade. The Financial Services Committee is ready with solutions to foster innovation and create economic opportunity for all Americans, but we need the resources to deliver.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman McHenry.
Ranking Member Waters is now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MAXINE WATERS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. WATERS. Thank you very much. Good morning, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle. I am pleased to be testifying alongside Chairman McHenry this morning to discuss the funding needs of the Committee on Financial Services.

This is my second tour as Ranking Member of the committee having previously served from 2013 through 2018. Given this previous experience as Ranking Member and my more recent experience as the committee's first Chairwoman, I believe that I have a unique perspective on the committee and the funding level it needs in order to be effective.

Our committee splits its funding without restriction with one-third for the minority and two-thirds for the majority. This split has been very helpful in budgeting and meeting our needs, and I see no reason for it to change.

The Committee on Financial Services has jurisdiction over our nation's financial institutions, capital markets, housing programs, monetary policy, and certain aspects of our nation's national security. These issues are highly complex yet critical for the effective functioning of our nation's economy.

As a result, the committee must and has under Democratic and Republican leadership undertaken strong oversight of our nation's financial and housing systems. We are also on the front lines of any economic crisis. During the 2008 subprime meltdown, our committee was at the forefront of passing legislation to save our financial system from imploding. Several years later, we enacted legislation to prevent any future financial market meltdowns.

Under my leadership as Chairwoman, our committee once again was called upon to draft and pass legislation to protect the economy at the onset of the pandemic and, later, to improve its implementation, including by strengthening the PPP program so that more community development, financial institutions, and minority depository institutions could fairly participate.

Later, I worked with Chairman McHenry to secure historic capital and emergency investments into these institutions. When a wave of evictions threatened to create millions of new homeless Americans, our committee quickly drafted legislation to fund emergency rental assistance programs, which was signed into law by President Trump and again by President Biden.

Today, as the cryptocurrency markets melt down, the Financial Services Committee will once again be the leader in drafting legislation to protect consumers and investors while encouraging responsible innovation and safeguarding our financial system from the threats of unscrupulous actors in the cryptomarket.

All of this work requires staff. I am honored to have a staff that consists of the smartest, brightest, and most informed public policy professionals in Washington. They are true public servants and have strong values in advocating and legislating for policies that lift the most vulnerable. They worked tirelessly during the pandemic and transitioned seamlessly to a hybrid working environ-

ment, never once dropping a step. This is why I am pleased that, during our transition to the minority, the vast majority of staff were retained. Due to sound management of our committee funds at current funding levels, we do not foresee any pay cuts or furloughs. However, maintaining the status quo is simply not sufficient given the scale of the work in front of us.

My Chairman has laid out an ambitious agenda that will require us to increase our staffing and expenditures to ensure that we are able to properly engage with him on the important issues he needs to take on. While I don't foresee any pay cuts or furloughs at our current staff levels, we also don't have funding available for any pay raises and bonuses either.

In addition, as the Chairman has indicated that he would like to hold field hearings, which I think is so very important, we would require additional funds to pay for the travel of staff and Members to these events to ensure that Democratic Members can participate. I am also aware that he is planning a robust legislative and oversight agenda, which will require my staff to also work hard to keep up.

In short, without additional funds, we will not be able to expand our operations or reward staff for their solid work through bonuses at the end of the year. Therefore, I certainly support the Chairman's request for a 5-percent budget increase for our committee. This is a reasonable amount and will allow the entire committee to function at its full potential.

While there are many things that the Chairman and I will disagree on over the next 2 years, it should say a lot to this Committee that funding and staffing is the one thing that we will always agree on.

I strongly encourage the Committee to appreciate and give additional weight to our unity on this important issue and to fund the committee accordingly. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Waters follows:]

Testimony of the Honorable Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
Committee on Financial Services
Before the House Committee on Administration
March 1, 2023 9:40 AM

Good morning, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle. I'm pleased to be testifying alongside Chairman McHenry this morning to discuss the funding needs of the Committee on Financial Services. This is my second tour as Ranking Member of the Committee, having previously served from 2013 through 2018. Given this previous experience as Ranking Member and my more recent experience as the Committee's first Chairwoman, I believe that I have a unique perspective on the Committee and the funding level it needs in order to be effective.

Our Committee splits its funding without restriction with one-third for the minority and two-thirds for the majority. This split has been very helpful in budgeting and meeting our needs and I see no reason for it to change.

The Committee on Financial Services has jurisdiction over our nation's financial institutions, capital markets, housing programs, monetary policy, and certain aspects of our nation's national security. These issues are highly complex yet critical for the effective functioning of our nation's economy. As a result, the Committee must and has, under Democratic and Republican leadership, undertaken strong oversight of our nation's financial and housing systems. We are also on the front lines of any economic crises. During the 2008 subprime meltdown, our Committee was at the forefront of passing legislation to save our financial system from imploding and several years later we enacted legislation to prevent any future financial market meltdowns.

Under my leadership as Chairwoman, our Committee once again was called upon to draft and pass legislation to protect the economy at the onset of the pandemic, and later to improve its implementation, including by strengthening the PPP program so that more community

development financial institutions and minority depository institutions could fairly participate. Later, I worked with Chairman McHenry to secure historic capital and emergency investments into these institutions. And when a wave of evictions threatened to create millions of new homeless Americans, our Committee quickly drafted legislation to fund emergency rental assistance programs, which was signed into law by President Trump and again by President Biden. Today, as the cryptocurrency markets meltdown, the Financial Services Committee will once again be the leader in drafting legislation to protect consumers and investors while encouraging responsible innovation and safeguarding our financial system from the threats of unscrupulous actors in the crypto market.

All of this work requires staff. I'm honored to have a staff that consists of the smartest, brightest, and most informed public policy professionals in Washington. They are true public servants and have strong values in advocating and legislating for policies that lift up the most vulnerable. They worked tirelessly during the pandemic and transitioned seamlessly to a hybrid working environment, never once dropping a step. This is why I am pleased that during our transition to the minority, the vast majority of staff were retained and due to sound management of our Committee funds, at current funding levels, we do not foresee any pay cuts or furloughs. However, maintaining the status quo is simply not sufficient given the scale of the work in front of us.

My chairman has laid out an ambitious agenda that will require us to increase our staffing and expenditures to ensure that we are able to properly engage with him on the important issues he means to take on. And while I don't foresee pay cuts or furloughs, at our current staffing levels, we also don't have funding available for pay raises or bonuses either. In addition, as the Chairman has indicated that he would like to hold field hearings, we would require additional funds to pay for the travel of staff and Members to these events to ensure that Democratic Members can participate. I am also aware that he is planning a robust legislative and oversight agenda, which will require my staff to also work hard to keep up. In short, without additional funds we will not be able to expand our operations or reward staff for their solid work through bonuses at the end of the year.

Therefore, I support the Chairman's request for a 5 percent budget increase for our Committee. This is a reasonable amount and will allow the entire Committee to function at its full potential. While there are many things that the Chairman and I will disagree on over the next two years, it should say a lot to this Committee that funding and staffing is the one thing that we will always agree on. I strongly encourage the Committee to appreciate and give additional weight to our unity on this important issue and to fund the Committee accordingly.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Waters. In the attempt to make this more efficient than a Financial Services markup, the Chair and Ranking Member will control 5 minutes in total each.

I will now yield to Mr. Loudermilk for the purpose of asking questions.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McHenry, we have had several conversations of the challenges that we face in the committee, one of those being the calendar. We have more work to do than we have time to do it, especially in the first quarter.

What other challenges do you see facing Financial Services Committee?

Mr. MCHENRY. Well, the combination of that tight calendar—the tight legislative calendar and a big agenda, the oversight agenda and the legislative agenda, means that the staffing resources become foremost, right? You have staff that has to work very intensely in a very narrow window. We marked out 12 bills yesterday in a 3-day workweek. We have had six committee hearings in 2 days—six subcommittee hearings in 2 days. In order to do that, you have to have staff commensurate with that.

Then we find ourselves with the subscriptions that apparently media outlets have figured out that Congress doesn't know how to negotiate, and they try to pick us off committee by committee. We have the same problem in Financial Services. We want to make sure our staff has the best inputs, best information possible. Access to that information is really important.

Bloomberg is the biggest racket. There is not standardized pricing. What we have for Financial Services versus what you have at House Administration versus what the Ag Committee—there is no standardized pricing. They will tell you what it is. It is the oldest of old-school rackets. POLITICO Pro is the same thing. They are looking for us as an avenue to make their profits.

Look, I am not opposed to profits. We can have the debate about capitalism versus socialism and all this other stuff. The fact is we should get a value for our taxpayer dollars, and that is what I am trying to do with staffing levels. That is what I am trying to do with how we communicate with information and things of the sort.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Another area that has been a big focus in this Congress is oversight. How do you intend to ensure our oversight goals are met?

Mr. MCHENRY. Well, first, we have hired talented staff—highly capable, very competent staff. There is a lot of competition for that on the Republican side and the Democrat side, for that matter. We hired very well.

The competitive pressures with the higher cap for Hill salaries also put pressure on our budget. We have to go to compete, and we have a very talented staff that can do very well outside of government service but want to serve the American people and want to serve this institution. That staffing pressure and the payroll pressures is real.

We also have important software that is necessary. Clearwell and Concordance are two of the viable options. Concordance is like driving a beat-up Kia, and Clearwell is like the brandnew BMW.

What we kind of want to have for committee is like a Honda. Like, we just want to have, like, a mid-level, really reliable, good car, but nobody prices that.

Making sure the software is there so you can go through these major document requests. This is something both sides use. It is technology that is politically agnostic. We want to make sure, you know, that software is available.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Very thorough with the answers. I think you answered all my other questions, and other than a concern that you never brought up a Ford F-150, I yield back to the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I reserve the balance of the time, yield 5 minutes to the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, first of all, Chair McHenry and Ranking Member Waters, for being here and for your collaboration. I am going to reserve my time and yield to Ms. Sewell.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you so much, Ranking Member.

First of all, let me just say, having been on the Financial Services Committee, it is a pleasure to not only see both of you here today but also to reiterate the importance of your committee and importance of the funding of your committee.

My question is actually with respect to the distribution of it. As I understand, most committees have two-thirds to the majority and one-third for the minority. I assume that is the same in your committee as well?

Ms. WATERS. Yes.

Ms. SEWELL. I guess I just really want to understand if the one-third split gives the minority Ranking Member unfettered, you know, unrestricted access to those resources, and would like to just understand that a little bit better.

Mr. MCHENRY. Yes. Because of the two previous Congresses, there are things that I raised with Chairwoman Waters 4 years ago and 2 years ago that it was my intention to fix because that is what I wanted at the time.

Ms. SEWELL. Yes.

Mr. MCHENRY. I have tried to meet that standard of whatever my complaint was 2 and 4 years ago, though modest, frankly, and on budget requests and staffing, we actually have a—I think we have treated each other equitably. She has certainly treated me equitably, and her staff director treated my previous staff director and current staff director quite equitably.

The staff converses quite well. On sharing of technology and things of that sort that we have to do, the basic functioning of the committee, the clerks have worked well together. All that stuff, we have tried to make—as Chair, Chairwoman Waters offered to me that same level of kind of agreement on those items, and I intend to follow that this Congress as well in our relationship.

We can debate policy, and we want to do that. Frankly, we do that.

Ms. WATERS. A lot.

Mr. MCHENRY. A lot, but on this, as the Ranking Member said, we have at least have good alignment here so we can then have those debates.

Ms. SEWELL. Ranking Member Waters, do you have anything to add to that?

Ms. WATERS. Well, no, except that what you see between the two of us is a good working relationship. As a matter of fact, I think he has adequately described how we treat each other and how we respond to each other's requests.

I am here today in strong support of the request for a 5-percent increase. I think we are deserving. We have a very complicated and complex committee. We didn't even talk about the work we must do dealing with all of Wall Street and all of our financial institutions.

Of course, we are looking forward, as the Chairman is, to getting out on some field trips so that we can say—

Ms. SEWELL. Can I ask about those field trips, actually? I was wondering—I saw that the budget calls for 22 members and staff. Are they going to be bipartisan field trips, and so will we have good participation by both sides with respect to that?

Mr. MCHENRY. That is my intention. That is my intention.

Ms. WATERS. Yes. I think we should treat it the same way we treat CODELS, where we invite members from the opposite side to participate. That is very important because, as we travel across this country, it is important that we see it from different angles.

When Democrats go to some of the Republican areas, we learn something about what is going on in those communities. Of course, you know, one of my great hopes and wishes is that we have real bipartisan work on housing for rural and urban. I want to go to both rural and urban communities with both sides of the committee and see what is going on and respond to those requests.

Ms. SEWELL. Well, thank you both for coming today. I can tell you that getting out of Washington and into the field really is important, and just encourage you all to do what you can to both agree on where you go but also making sure that it is truly bipartisan.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Ms. WATERS. You are welcome.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both for being here today. This concludes your testimony. I appreciate you coming in. We know the importance of the work the committee is going to do. We are definitively going to be looking into the subscription piece. This Congress, we think we have some opportunities for dramatic improvements in that. Appreciate your commitment to restoring regular order and transparency to the American taxpayer.

Ms. WATERS. Thank you.

Mr. MCHENRY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Have a wonderful day.

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, thank you for coming before us today. This is our commitment to restoring regular order to the House and transparency to the American taxpayer.

We are going to give each of you up to 5 minutes for an opening statement. Then myself and the Ranking Member will each control a total of 5 minutes each for the purpose of asking questions.

I will now yield 5 minutes to Mr. Rogers for an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. MIKE ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA**

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Chairman Steil and the Ranking Member Morelle, members of the Committee, for having us here today.

I am here with Ranking Member Smith, my partner on the Armed Services Committee. We appreciate your consideration of our budget request for the 118th Congress. Rest assured, we take the expenditure of taxpayer dollars seriously. Every dollar entrusted to us will be used to advance our nation's security interests.

The Armed Services Committee authorizes and oversees over half of all discretionary spending in the fiscal year, yet our committee is not funded accordingly. The growth of defense spending has outpaced HASC's ability to conduct proper oversight. The American people expect us to review every dollar the DOD gets and every authorization they use.

For 62 straight years, our committee has produced an NDAA to implement oversight and authorize the DOD. That doesn't mean the task is easy. Members both on and off the committee are more engaged in the process than ever before, which is great.

During the Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA, Members submitted around a thousand proposals and nearly 1,200 amendments. Yet, in Fiscal Year 2023, those numbers grew to 1,500 proposals and 2,100 amendments. The amount of effort and time it takes to evaluate all of those proposals outpace the amount of time our members and staff have. Thus, we are shortchanging this body and the American people.

The Armed Services Committee has not seen a cap increase since 2009, yet the workload has exploded. This is one of the reasons we are seeking more staff. We cannot let the workload hamper the demands of the members on and off the committee.

HASC is also permitted seven legislative subcommittees in the House rules. In the last Congress, Chairman Smith, with my concurrence, created a seventh subcommittee, yet we were not provided additional staff and resources to fully support that subcommittee. In fact, we took one subcommittee to help staff and fund the new one. With additional resources, we would be able to fully support members on these subcommittees.

HASC also does not have a travel budget. This is a growing interest in holding field hearings across the country. Under our current budget, the committee doesn't have the ability to do that. We are seeking additional funding so that we could hold field hearings outside D.C. As Members, we all know how important it is with the work we do.

HASC is very fortunate to attract people that are predisposed to serve this country. On our staff, we have former fighter pilots, marines, sailors, soldiers, Ph.D.'s, and lawyers. Don't hold it against us; we have lawyers.

These people all attract—are attractive to the executive branch and the private sector. We must be able to recruit and retain the best staff we can. A budget increase would ensure we have the staff to support our work our members require of them.

Thank you for consideration, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rogers follows:]

I want to start by thanking Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and the Members of this Committee for having us here today. You have difficult decisions before you and I don't envy your positions.

I am here today with Ranking Member Smith, my partner at the Armed Services Committee. We take the expenditure of taxpayer dollars seriously and will always ensure the budget allotted to our Committee will be spent judiciously and prudently. Every taxpayer dollar entrusted to us will be used to advance our nation's national security policies. As I am sure all of you are aware, our Committee has consistently produced for the American people and our warfighters. We do this by focusing on our work and our budget request reflects this task.

The committees of this House are the engines that drive the legislative agenda of this body. From the first spark of an idea to passage off the House floor, Committees constantly are moving forward with legislation for the Members to consider, debate, and ultimately vote on.

At the Armed Services Committee, this is very much the case. Our Committee authorizes and oversees more than half of all discretionary spending, and we do it every year. That is a lot to ask of the Members and staff. Resourcing our Committee to reflect this reality shouldn't be controversial.

The American people expect that we don't waste their tax dollars on unnecessary programs and platforms. For 62 straight years, our Committee has examined every dollar going to the DOD through the National Defense Authorization Act. The NDAA implements the rigorous oversight our members to conduct and ensures the Department of Defense is following Congressional intent. No other Committee can say that the department and agencies they oversee get a thorough review every single year.

The Members of our Committee take their role of authorizing and overseeing the Department of Defense with the seriousness it requires. Every day, our Members are engaged with the DOD, with Members off our Committee, with our warfighters, with industry, and with thought leaders. It is quite impressive to see that level of engagement.

That doesn't mean it's an easy task for our Members or staff to draft the NDAA. The complexity of national security issues gets more challenging every year. The programs and platforms we authorize get more detailed and more complex with the advancement of technology. Tracking these programs takes years and years of oversight and requires technical knowledge. Our Members and staff work for years to ensure that the taxpayer dollars aren't being wasted on programs that are failing or don't meet our national security interests.

And it's not just that these programs are getting more complex. It's also that the Members of this House are engaging in the NDAA process at historic levels. The FY2020 NDAA contained just over 1,000 Members provisions and saw nearly 1,200 amendments filed over the course of the committee markup and floor consideration. Last year those numbers increased significantly. The FY2023 NDAA contained more than 1,500 Member provisions and saw more than 2,100 amendments filed and considered.

While the Members of HASC are engaged daily on the issues before our Committee, the majority of the work on Member provisions and amendments falls on staff. It's not easy work which is why we need talented individuals to complement the work of the Members.

In some ways, we are lucky. Our Committee attracts individuals predisposed to serve their country. On staff we employ fighter pilots, career military servicemembers, PhDs, and others with long careers in service to America. These staff work hard for the Members and we are proud of the work they do. Which is why we need to do everything we can as Members to retain them.

Keeping and recruiting talent is getting more difficult every year. We often lose good staff to the private sector and, worse than that, the Executive Branch. Being able to pay staff what they are worth is important to us. Having the right number of staff to meet the workload is just as vital. Too often, we overwork staff because we don't have enough to meet the needs of the Members. Our ask for additional staff comes because we want to ensure that the oversight and legislating required of us is completed at the level the Members expect. I will add that we have not had a staff increase at HASC since 2009.

Thank you for your consideration of our budget request. I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chair Rogers.
Ranking Member Smith, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Thank you.

Briefly, I agree with everything Chairman Rogers said. We have worked together on this for a long time. I have a statement which I will submit for the record. I just really want to emphasize the point about how the budget hasn't grown since 2009 for our committee and, in particular, the importance of the staff as the size of the defense budget and the oversight responsibilities have grown. That in and of itself is overwhelming.

As we all know, the NDAA has become a vehicle for a lot of other issues that aren't necessarily directly in our jurisdiction, which is fine. By and large, the other committees work those issues, but it is still our staff that then has to make sure that we know what is going on when we put it into the bill. I mean, every year, our staff members, they have the expertise that Chairman Rogers described. Then they get to become experts in all manner of different other issues that are coming their way.

At the end of the day, what we need more than anything is more staff in order to properly serve the House. I think it is outstanding that, in our bill, pretty much all 435 Members participate at one level or another. Chairman Rogers gave you the statistics on the volume of the amendments submitted. That is great, but we need the staff to be able to properly vet that and properly handle it.

I hope you will consider that request, and I yield back. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith of Washington follows:]

Prepared Remarks for the Committee on House Administration's Hearing on Committee
Funding for the 118th Congress

Congressman Adam Smith
Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee

March 1, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, Members of the Committee, it's my pleasure to testify today alongside my friend and partner on the House Armed Services Committee, Chairman Mike Rogers.

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) has a long bipartisan tradition for conducting year-round oversight of the Department of Defense and developing the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). For 62 consecutive years, the NDAA has been enacted into law. Each version of the NDAA has reflected priorities of members on both sides of the aisle and ensured that our warfighters have the equipment, resources, authorities, and training to conduct their missions and support our national security. The way the committee is funded, organized, and operates is the foundation that this 62-year bipartisan tradition has been built and that is why I would ask for your support of our committee's funding request.

Our funding request submitted to the Committee on House Administration contains detailed justifications that cover subscriptions, equipment, software, and other spending categories that support HASC's day-to-day operations. But I want to take this time to focus on the line item that makes up the bulk of our funding request, and that is compensation for the committee's staff.

The HASC administrative and professional staff are critical to the committee's work. We take our oversight role seriously and seek to maintain a staff that brings a depth of knowledge and experience. These individuals work tirelessly to support the committee's oversight work, development of the NDAA, and provide subject matter expertise and advice to our members. On paper, the minority is allocated 15 staff positions, the majority controls the remaining 56 staff positions, though a number of those are non-partisan positions that provide equal support to the majority and minority staff. In practice, our committee's staff are often interchangeable and provide information and recommendations to members on both sides of the aisle regardless of whether they are technically listed as a majority or minority staffer. Without adequate funding, the committee may struggle to recruit and retain these subject matter experts which could diminish the value of the work we do at HASC.

It is also worth pointing out that the size of the NDAA as well as volume of member requests submitted for consideration in the NDAA have both grown exponentially in recent years. The FY2020 NDAA contained just over 1,000 provisions and saw nearly 1,200 amendments filed over the course of the committee markup and floor consideration of the bill. By comparison, the final FY2023 NDAA contained more than 1,500 provisions and saw more than 2,100 amendments filed and considered. The issues the committee oversees are complex and the added

legislative work requires countless hours from Members and staff to review, redraft, and provide recommendations to colleagues. And while this oversight and legislative workload has increased, the size of the committee staff has not grown since 2009. As part of our request, we are seeking 10 additional staff spots with corresponding funding for salaries and technology.

We all know that finding and retaining the right staff is key to the work we do in the House. At a committee like HASC, staff that can provide a deep understanding of the complex authorities and programs run by the DOD, as well as obtain and maintain necessary security clearances, and are usually well into their careers. Thus, we are constantly recruiting from the military, executive branch agencies, industry, and academia. Many are well accomplished in their fields. From fighter pilots to PhDs, we employ a varying and diverse skill set to execute for our members. These professional staff are highly sought after by the Executive Branch and the private sector which is why offering competitive salaries is necessary to attract and retain this talented workforce. But our staff are overworked, and we have struggled to compete with compensation offered by the Executive Branch and private sector. The HASC budget request will enable the committee to compete for and retain talented staff, while also ensuring the staff is properly sized to support the oversight and legislative expectations of the House.

HASC has been good stewards of the taxpayer dollars made available to committee and we plan on continuing that with any new funding you provide to us. We understand the funding for House Committees is finite, but we encourage the Committee on House Administration to allow the House to punch above its weight by fully funding the committees. We appreciate your time and consideration of our request and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Smith. The Chair and the Ranking Member now each control 5 minutes for the purposes of asking you questions.

I will yield to Ms. Bice.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is great to see both of you at this Committee this morning.

You mentioned the additional staff members that you are requesting in this proposal. Having been on the new subcommittee that was created under HASC last year, CITI Subcommittee. We did a remarkable job, I think, with limited resources, and the staff was incredible to work with.

Can you talk a little bit about why you think those additional 10 slots are needed, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. ROGERS. Well, because we have had to pull from existing subcommittees to do that. As I said, since 2009, we haven't had any additional staff, and the volume of our work has exploded. They were already strained, and I know everybody expects us to do good oversight.

Well, the NDAA is oversight. You know, nobody else in this body passes an authorization bill every year. In fact, nobody else in this body passes an authorization every decade. We have enormous amounts of work. Pulling staff away from existing subcommittees to take on this new responsibility, which is very important—as you know, the theater of warfighting is evolving, and having this specialized technology needs to be focused on, and we have to do that with these subcommittees. We can't do it adequately, in my view, without additional staff.

Mrs. BICE. Do you think that additional staff will help with oversight as well?

Mr. ROGERS. I know it will.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Ranking Member?

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Again, I agree with everything he said. I mean, I think the complexity that goes on here, just to give you one example, I mean, the Pentagon has not done a full audit, as we all know, which means literally they don't know for sure exactly all of the assets that they have. There is a reason for that, and the reason is because the Pentagon is the mother of all bureaucracies. I mean, it is an enormous amount of money. It is an enormous amount of responsibility.

Our job is to try to make sure that they get to the point where they can do that audit and, in the meantime, monitor everything that they have even without that. The level of expertise required in the staff, I mean, we all can come up with the ideas. We can say "we ought to do that," Okay, and it is the staff that then has to dive into the code, dive into all manner of—I don't even know the terminology, to be perfectly honest with you, to understand the regulations and the law and the history, so how you can do that effectively. That staff expertise is what makes our committee go, without question.

Mrs. BICE. Absolutely. How has the increased participation in Members crafting NDAA and the significant increase in the number of amendments that are being submitted impacted the committee's ability to handle the legislative load?

Mr. ROGERS. It has been pretty overwhelming. You know, again, I emphasize, we authorize over half of all discretionary spending. This—just in its own jurisdiction, this bill is big. Because it passes every year and everybody knows that, the rest of the House depends on this vehicle for the larger body's legislative activities. I just—the Ranking Member said that the staff is expected to become experts in things other than just our subject matter, and we just are overwhelmed. We need more—we need more folks.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. The only thing I would add to that is the number—you know, I think it was 2019 when, you know, as these ideas keep coming in, we keep processing them through. Then, of course, we also have to go through the floor. I remember my staff telling me that there were, like, I think, two Parliamentarians in the House who literally quit because, you know, you guys can come up with these ideas. We are the ones that have to write them and have to make them fit, and they just—they were overwhelmed. They couldn't handle it.

The only final thing I will say about that, there is a part of this that is a really good thing. You know, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned, you know, the voice of the people and democracy and all that. It is an outstanding thing that all 435 Members are participating in this process. It really is. It is good for our constituents. It is good for the country. It is good for how people perceive the legislative process. We have to have the people in order to make sure that we can do it effectively without driving people to quit.

Mrs. BICE. Well, having been a member of the House Armed Services Committee last Congress and sitting through the markup of the NDAA through dozens or hundreds of amendments, I agree with you wholeheartedly.

My last and final question is: It is my understanding that you have invested in software to be able to manage the amendment process because there are so many amendments that are being submitted by Members of this body.

Can you talk a little bit about the importance of that and why you have shared that with, actually, Senate Armed Services?

Mr. ROGERS. Yes. That software has been really valuable to us. I don't know how we would have handled all that input, whether it is proposals or amendments, without it. It also has a cost itself.

This last year, because we had such a large uptick in amendments and proposals, we spent \$600,000 to use that software, whereas we had been spending, like, 150 to 200 before. The software is great. I am glad we got it, but it costs money to use it.

Mrs. BICE. Okay.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Of course I miss the days of passing out all the papers so that, by the end of the day, in markup, we had a stack of paper—

Mr. ROGERS. It would be about this tall, yes.

Mr. SMITH of Washington.—under your desk all spread out all over the place, but the software is more efficient.

Mr. ROGERS. The forests appreciate the fact that we don't do it anymore.

Mrs. BICE. The forest does appreciate that.

Mr. ROGERS. Yes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your time this morning.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I now yield 5 minutes to Ms. Sewell for the purpose of asking questions.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As a new member of HASC, I am—I can truly attest to the fact that you both work very hard to work together, and the partnership is very important. I can also attest that we in the Alabama delegation are very proud of you, Mr. Chairman, as a fellow member of our delegation. Roll Tide.

Mr. ROGERS. Roll Tide.

Ms. SEWELL. My question, actually, is really just about the—how you guys decide or utilize your budget. I understand that lots of committees do two-thirds of a budget go to the majority and one-third go to the minority. I just want to understand how that is working and whether or not Mr. Smith, Chairman—Ranking Member Smith will have the opportunity to have unrestricted access to his one-third.

Mr. ROGERS. Yes. We have historically had a lot of professional staff that stayed no matter which side is in the majority, and we have continued that practice. I don't see us—I don't think we have done anything different this cycle than Chairman Smith did in the last cycle.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Yes. That is a crucial point. We don't do two-thirds/one-third. We have a general budget, and then we decide between us on how to do that. The overwhelming majority of our staff is viewed as bipartisan. A number of people who worked in our majority in the previous Congress are now working in their majority.

Again, it is not—it is not about partisanship on the committee. It is about expertise. Once you get people who have that knowledge that I keep talking about, you know, it is not partisan. We need—and we need that expertise and that background and experience.

Ms. SEWELL. I look forward to using—utilizing this new software for my very first NDAA.

Mr. ROGERS. Pay for it, please.

Ms. SEWELL. I just want to say what a pleasure it is to serve on a committee where there really is true partnership and bipartisanship. We would want to see that in our national security and for our defense. Thank you both for being who you are, and continue the great work of this committee.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chair Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, thank you very much for being here. Appreciate your willingness to come here and testify as we return to regular order.

Have a wonderful day.

Members of the Committee, we are going to do one more panel before we travel down to votes. We are going to do this as efficiently as possible. I know Chairman Green is a true believer in efficiency and will work with us to do that.

Chair Green, Ranking Member Thompson, thank you for being with us today. This is our commitment to restoring regular order and providing transparency to the American people. We will give

each of you up to 5 minutes—no need to use it all—for your opening statement. Then the—myself and the Ranking Member will each control 5 minutes for questions. We may use less than that in full due to the pending votes.

Chair Green, you are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARK E. GREEN, M.D., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee.

I want to start by congratulating both of you for your respective appointments to lead this important Committee, which plays a critical role in the daily operations that keep the House of Representatives running and of course our complex secure.

In the 118th Congress, the Homeland Security Committee will expand our important work overseeing the Department of Homeland Security and its components, including Customs and Border Patrol, U.S.—or Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Border Patrol, the Transportation Security Administration, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many others.

DHS is the third largest department in the federal government with a \$70 billion budget and around 250,000 employees. The mission of DHS is critical to protecting America from a litany of threats stemming from terrorism, adversarial cyber actors, the Chinese Communist Party, natural disasters, and, of course, the crisis along our southwest border. By investing in the Homeland Security Committee, you are making an investment in the security of the American people.

Primarily, the committee's budget request will be invested in recruiting and retaining the top talent needed to sustain an aggressive tempo of investigations, legislative deployment, our development, and committee oversight activities. Additionally, the Committee on Homeland Security must maintain the resources needed to go where the mission takes us—across the homeland to hear from those serving in the front lines.

We have planned a robust cadence of site visits, field hearings, and investigative travel to hold DHS accountable and provide oversight to its wide and varying mission set, from our largest cities facing threats from terrorism to underserved rural communities facing natural disasters and everywhere in between. We will maintain a steady presence along our southwest border, which faces unprecedented challenges.

We will also investigate the Chinese Communist Party's threats to our supply chain at our Nation's commercial ports and DHS' role in enforcing provisions of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, and we will continue maturing the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency as it supports state and local government and private-sector businesses across the country. All this work requires the right investment for our mission.

Thank you for taking the time to examine our funding request, and I look forward to answering any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Green follows:]

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
Testimony of Chairman Mark E. Green, MD (R-TN)
Before the

Committee on House Administration: 118th Congress Committee Funding Resolutions

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

I want to start by congratulating both the Chairman and Ranking Member on your respective appointments to lead this important Committee, which plays a critical role in the daily operations that keep the House of Representatives running smoothly and the Capitol complex secure. No one knows better than the Members of the Committee on House Administration the essential mission you all have, and I know I speak for all my colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee when I say we sincerely appreciate the often unsung work you do.

In the 118th Congress, the Homeland Security Committee will expand our important work overseeing the Department of Homeland Security and its components, including Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Border Patrol, the Transportation Security Administration, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many others. DHS is the third largest department in the federal government, with a \$70 billion budget and around 250,000 employees. The mission of DHS is critical to protecting America from a litany of threats stemming from terrorism, adversarial cyber actors, the Chinese Communist Party, natural disasters, and, of course, the crisis along our southwest border.

By investing in the Homeland Security Committee, you are making an investment in the security of the American People. Threats facing American communities are constantly evolving, and it takes a tremendous amount of effort on the part of our Committee to stay on top of how DHS is responding to those threats and stewarding massive amounts of taxpayer dollars. It is incumbent upon our Committee to successfully enact legislative reform, where necessary, and conduct rigorous oversight.

Primarily, the Committee's budget request will be invested in recruiting and retaining the top talent needed to sustain an aggressive tempo of investigations, legislative development, and committee oversight activities. Additionally, the Committee on Homeland Security must maintain the resources needed to go where the mission takes us across the homeland to hear from those serving on the front lines. We have planned a robust cadence of site visits, field hearings, and investigative travel to hold DHS accountable and provide oversight to its wide and varying mission set—from our largest cities facing threats from terrorism to underserved rural communities facing natural disasters and everywhere in between.

We will maintain a steady presence along our southwest border, which faces unprecedented challenges. We will also investigate the Chinese Communist Party's threats to our supply chains at our nation's commercial ports and DHS's role in enforcing provisions of the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act*. And we will continue maturing the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency as it supports state and local governments and private sector businesses across the country.

But all this important work requires the right investment in our mission. For every dollar provided for the work of the Homeland Security Committee, Congress and the American People will see a strong return on their investment. We will diligently steward our resources with the utmost integrity. Our funding request is not filled with things that would be nice to have or do, but those which are essential to overseeing the third largest department and keeping our homeland secure.

Thank you for taking the time to examine our funding request, and I look forward to answering any questions you all may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chair Green.
Ranking Member Thompson, you are now recognized.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Thank you very much, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you to present the and support my Chairperson's funding request for Fiscal Year 2024.

As you know—well, for me, it is my 20th year on the committee. We started as a select committee, got jurisdiction. As the Chair has already indicated, we are now the third largest committee in Congress with significant missions dealing with cybersecurity; we have to secure our air, land, and sea borders; emergency preparedness; response and recovery.

More importantly, the people who work at this agency do the Lord's work. They respond to disasters in Selma, Alabama, which is ongoing right now, and it is a major undertaking. Our budget, there is no disagreement in the request from the Chairman and myself.

There are some areas we need to look at—counter unmanned aerial surveillance, DHS countering weapons of mass destruction, as well as chemical plant security. We look forward to—with the proper funding, to do the necessary oversight in these areas.

With that, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thompson of Mississippi follows:]

**Testimony in Support of the FY 2024 Committee on Homeland Security
Before the Committee on House Administration
February 28, 2023**

Thank you Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you to speak in support the Committee on Homeland Security's funding request for Fiscal Year 2024.

Last month marked my twentieth year on the Committee. What was started in 2003 as a temporary, select committee formed to oversee the newly-created Department of Homeland Security, has matured into a standing panel with broad oversight and growing legislative responsibilities.

In the Committee's earliest days, our work was primary focused on bolstering security and information sharing to prevent future attacks by foreign terrorist organizations like al Qaeda.

Today, with the threat landscape far more diverse and complex, our oversight responsibilities have expanded to include DHS' efforts to:

- detect, prevent, and respond to threats posed by domestic violent extremists, transnational criminal organizations, and hostile nation-states;
- cybersecurity;
- the security of our air, land, and sea borders;
- the security of air, rail, mass transit, pipelines and all other transportation modes;
- emergency preparedness, response, and recovery; and
- nuclear, biological, radiological, chemical, and explosive threats.

Last Congress, the Committee held 25 Full Committee hearings and 50 subcommittee hearings. Despite the pandemic, we were able to conduct three field hearings – *in New Jersey, Nevada, and Michigan* – and site visits to New York City, Puerto Rico, and Florida.

This Congress, *with additional resources*, we are well-positioned to build on this record and to increase our oversight of DHS' efforts in the field as well as international engagement with foreign partners.

On the legislative front, an increase in budgetary resources will help ensure the Committee has adequate resources to advance timely legislative initiatives.

Areas that require urgent attention include the reauthorization of expiring laws relating to:

- counter-unmanned aerial surveillance;
- DHS' Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office; and
- Chemical facility security.

Last Congress, CHS advanced over 55 measures to the Full House and succeeded in getting 23 enacted into law. Notable accomplishments include significant initiatives to enhance our nation's cybersecurity posture. Going into the 118th Congress, we will be looking to build upon those achievements.

I do not need to tell you that it takes a lot of staff work and resources to carry all the great oversight and legislative work we do. With respect to CHS, I am fortunate to have Hope Goins lead the talented and diverse professionals who make up the Democratic staff.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in the support of the budget proposal Chairman Green submitted. The resources sought are critical to ensuring that the Committee can continue to effectively carry out its responsibility as the primary authorizer of the nation's third largest Federal Department.

With that, I yield for any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Thompson.

I will now take the Chair's time and recognize Mr. D'Esposito for the purpose of asking questions.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Well, thank you.

Chairman, one of the things, as a new member of homeland security, that I have appreciated most from your leadership thus far is your thought process and mission that we should have our ears open, eyes open, and boots on the ground, which is one of the reasons why, in part of your budget, you have scheduled so many field hearings, so many trips.

Why do you believe that is so necessary in order for us to accomplish our mission of keeping this great nation safe?

Mr. GREEN. Well, it stems from two sources. First, the new Speaker has basically said he wants to take Congress to the American people. All these field hearings, we have to cover the expense of that.

I also believe, you know, from my time in the military, if you don't have the right intelligence, you can't make a good decision. We are going to put eyes and ears on the border. We are going to go to ports and look at our ports. We are going to go visit CISA and CYBERCOM and all these places and learn and know what is going on so we can all, both sides of the aisle, make informed decisions.

That is the purpose of that plus-up, and I appreciate your support of it.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Thank the Chairman.

My next question was going to be how your priorities are different this Congress than from the last Congress, but I think you answered that in the first question. Our Speaker has laid out, you know, a robust agenda for our committee, so I think that was answered.

Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I now recognize Ms. Sewell for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome. My question is really about the budget distribution. Just want to confirm that—that this budget is a shared budget and that two-thirds of it—a lot of committees do two-third/one-third, two-thirds majority/one-third minority. If you could just talk a little bit about that.

Also, just wanted to confirm that Ranking Member Thompson—I was about to say Chairman—Okay. Ranking Member Thompson.

Mr. GREEN. Don't worry, I do it in committee because he was my Chairman when I was a freshman, and so I call—I think two or three times now, I have called him Chairman.

Ms. SEWELL. Absolutely. Will Representative Thompson have unfettered, unrestricted access to his one-third?

Also, I wanted to ask a little—a question about the field hearings, but I will wait to ask that next.

Mr. GREEN. Sure. Absolutely. Yes. We have kept that arrangement, and, you know, I—Bennie and I are—I grew up about 40 miles from him in a little, small town in Mississippi. We are going to work well together. We are going to disagree on some issues. I

mean, that is the nature of the people who sent me here and the people who sent him here.

The last thing I am going to do is disregard him because, if I do, I am disregarding 760,000 Mississippians who decided to send him to Congress. The last thing I will do is be that guy.

We are going to work well together, and that means on the budget, too.

Ms. SEWELL. Great.

Mr. Thompson, do you have anything to add?

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Well, the formula is the same. When I Chaired, it was two-third/one-third.

Ms. SEWELL. Okay.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. That is what is proposed in this budget request.

Ms. SEWELL. Very good.

On field hearings, will there be bipartisan support at those field hearings? Will we have bipartisan staffing as well as an opportunity for all members to participate; and Is that the plan?

Mr. GREEN. Yes, absolutely. In fact, I hope—I hope that is how it works out. We are going to do everything we can to make sure that the resources are there, the requests are there. Just as we would run a committee hearing here, we are going to do everything to run the committee exactly the same in those locations where we go remote. That is the case with congressional delegations as well, where we are going on a factfinding mission and not necessarily a hearing, we will always have invites for both sides.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Thompson, anything to add?

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Well, we look forward to it. I can say the Chairman's enthusiasm, we have to temper with reality. There are some areas people want to go, it takes a couple days to get there, even in this country. With proper notification and planning, we can make it happen.

Mr. GREEN. Fair enough.

Ms. SEWELL. Sounds great. Well, I know that both of you know that the task ahead is very important to this country, and we look forward to your continued partnership and support of each other.

Thank you. Yield back.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both for being here. You guys have a big task in front of you. We have a serious crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border, and so I know you are going to be doing some field hearings, so I hope we do have an opportunity to have a real bipartisan or nonpartisan look at the challenges we are facing there.

I appreciate both of you testifying today, Ranking Member Thompson and Chairman Green. Thank you for being part of returning regular order to the House and transparency to the American taxpayers.

We will rush to votes.

This Committee will be then coming back quickly following votes for our next panel of witnesses.

This Committee stands in recess subject to call of the Chair.

[Recess.]

[11:25 a.m.]

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

Mr. Guest, thank you very much for joining us.

This is our commitment to returning to regular order and transparency to the American taxpayer.

I know Ranking Member Morelle is moments away, but, cognizant of the tight timeline we have, we will recognize you for 5 minutes for an opening statement. You don't have to use the whole time. Myself and the Ranking Member will each share 5 minutes total to ask questions.

With that, I will recognize you for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MICHAEL GUEST, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, members of the Committee.

In an effort to be efficient with your time, I am going to condense down the opening statement that has been submitted for the record.

First, I want to thank each of you for the work that you do, not only for Congress but on behalf of the Committee on House Administration. Thank you for having me today to allow me to justify the budget request on the House Committee on Ethics.

My partner on the Committee on Ethics, Ranking Member Susan Wild, was unable to join us today because of illness but does agree with the recommendations that will be presented here today. These recommendations were drafted originally by the nonpartisan staff that serve on this committee.

As many of you know, Ethics Committee is unique, and so is our budget request. I can confirm, again, that everything that I am going to be presenting before you today has the support not only of the nonpartisan staff—and, as many of you are aware, Ethics Committee is an equally divided committee, five Republicans, five Democrats. The staff is nonpartisan in nature except for legal counsel that both I have and the Ranking Member. All the staff is, in fact, nonpartisan. We do a very—we work very hard to try to keep politics out of the Ethics Committee.

As the—looking here, the opportunity to serve the House community continues to grow and modernize. To fulfill that opportunity, the Ethics Committee is requesting an additional \$658,600, or a 17-percent increase in funding, for 2023. Now, that is to do two things specifically—to acquire additional technology to help modernize the committee's adversary resources—advisory resources and to hire additional staff to assist with the increased caseload and the modernization process.

Key to modernization is maintaining a current ethics manual. I am sure that this is familiar with many of you as we, for many years have been operating under a 2008 House manual that I have here, red in color. This was the manual that has existed for a number of years, but I am proud to say that I have here with me today and will be happy, if anyone would like a copy, to present to you the 2022 House ethics manual.

It took a number of years to go from the red to the new version, but the committee staff has worked very diligently to bring the printed version up to date. I am proud of the work that they have done.

Also with the fact that this is available online, we are doing everything within our—possible to make sure that the information that we have there in the Ethics Committee is provided to Members so that information can be easily searched and easily accessed online. As there are future updates, we will immediately update those—the availability of that information online.

Many of you may also be aware that, as part of our recent rules package, that a task force will be established to conduct a comprehensive review of the House ethics rules. That is something that has not been done in more than 30 years. It is past overdue. Part of the funding that we are requesting is going to be to assist those Members, again, an equally appointed task force, half the Members being appointed by the Speaker, the other half by the majority leader, to do what we believe is a very important comprehensive review.

The rules, when they were written, many of those 30 years ago, did not take in some of the things that we deal with today. We are trying to move the rules into the 21st century and trying to make those rules easier for our Members to be able to not only access by having that information online, but easier to follow.

Very quickly—trying to make sure I touch on this—as it relates to 2024—I know that was something that we were asked to address. At this point, we would be asking for additional funds in 2024 of a little over \$240,000, or roughly a 5.4-percent increase.

As it relates to the funding that we are requesting and the staff positions, these are staff positions that are currently authorized but are not funded. We are not asking for this Committee to authorize additional staff, just to fund staff positions that are currently, at this time, unfilled.

House Ethics, like many of the other House staff, because of the private sector and the executive, we are constantly losing good people to the executive branch. We want to make sure that, if at all possible, we can maintain those people who have a wealth of knowledge so that we are not constantly in this cycle of bringing new people in, training new people—just as we get them where they are effective or efficient to be able to carry out their job duties, someone else comes in, pays them more money, and we lose them, and we start that process over and over again.

That is why we believed that—and, again, the technology that we are asking for, Mr. Chairman—

[The prepared statement of Mr. Guest follows:]

**Testimony of Chairman Michael Guest
Before Committee on House Administration
March 1, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. First, I want to thank you for the work each of you do to serve this Institution. Few Members aspire to serve on House Administration – or the Ethics Committee – but the work we do is critical and important to the daily functions of the House.

Thank you for inviting me to testify before the Committee on House Administration on the budget request for the House Committee on Ethics. My partner on our Committee, Ranking Member Susan Wild, and I are aware of the current budget environment. Small businesses and hardworking families are required to live on a balanced budget - and so should Congress. We are stewards of the taxpayer's dollar; and the House, including the Committee on Ethics, is no different.

The Ethics Committee is unique in many ways. One of the most important ways is that it exists to serve the House of Representatives, Members, House officers and employees – in addition to the American people. The Committee has three main unique functions. First, the Office of Advice and Education confidentially answers questions and provides ethics training to the House community. Second, the Committee is charged with investigating and adjudicating alleged violations of the House rules or related statutes. Third, the Committee reviews financial disclosure statements filed by Members, candidates, senior staff, and shared staff. We do not have Majority and Minority assigned staff. All staff at the Committee is nonpartisan. Even my counsel and the Ranking Member's counsel perform their duties in a nonpartisan fashion.

The work of the Committee is important and expansive. Last Congress, our nonpartisan staff worked incredibly hard. The Advice and Education division prepared 750 formal written advisory opinions; reviewed and recommended approval of more than 2,900 requests to accept privately-sponsored, officially-connected travel; fielded more than 36,000 informal telephone calls, emails, and in-person requests for guidance; prepared 25 advisory pink sheets; and provided ethics training to over 14,000 Members, officers, and employees. The Advice and Education Division is currently staffed by 6 attorneys and 2 professional staff. If I do the quick math, that means each A&E attorney fielded 6,000 calls, emails and in person requests for guidance last Congress.

The Financial Disclosure Division (which is currently staffed by 2 attorneys and 2 professional staff) received nearly 9,400 Financial Disclosure Statements and more than 4,000 Periodic Transaction Reports filed by Members, officers, senior staff, and House candidates last Congress.

The Investigations Division conducted fact-gathering on 72 separate investigative matters; impaneled three Investigative Subcommittees, or ISCs, held 12 ISC meetings; filed 11 reports with the House; publicly addressed 50 matters; resolved 6 additional matters; conducted 42 voluntary witness interviews; and reviewed over 125,000 pages of documents. The division also reviewed 111 fine notifications from the Sergeant at Arms and 47 Member appeals of those mask and magnetometer related fines. Currently, the Investigations Division is staffed by 6 attorneys and 2 professional staff.

The opportunity to serve the House community continues to grow and modernize. To fulfill that opportunity, the Ethics Committee is requesting an additional \$658,600 or a 17% increase in funding for 2023, to do two specific things: (1) to acquire additional technology to help modernize the Committee's advisory

resources, and (2) to hire approximately 7 additional staff to assist with the increased workload and modernization process.

Over the last decade, several new laws and rules have substantially increased the Committee's workload. The Committee also hired a new Financial Disclosure Director, whose decades of experience in executive branch financial disclosure has led the Committee to set new goals for what the Committee should be doing proactively to help our filers comply with requirements. For example, we are working with the Clerk's office to fix a recurring problem with the filing software. If a Member or senior staff tries to close the electronic filing system before completing a filing, they should receive a notification that the filing was not submitted. We are also working with the Clerk's office to gain permissions for Ethics counsel to create profiles for new filers, send notifications to filers, and to delete and purge records.

Meanwhile, the Committee will continue to modernize its guidance in both substance and method of delivery. In December, the Committee successfully tested a new, more interactive training at New Member Orientation, including live QR Code-accessible surveys and actual Press Headlines featuring past Member ethics mistakes. The Committee plans to roll out more training improvements, some of which involve licensing technology and securing assistance with video production and editing. The Committee would like to develop position-specific short videos for best practices and quick advice on the Committee website.

Key to modernization is maintaining a current Ethics Manual. I am sure that each of you is familiar with the old red 2008 House Ethics Manual. For too many years, the 2008 Manual has been out of date. At the end of the 117th Congress - and prior to New Member Orientation in December - the Committee worked with House Creative Services to create an updated 2022 PRINT version of the House Ethics Manual.

The online 2022 PRINT is available on the Committee website and includes updated sections on Gifts and Travel. Other sections of the Manual will be updated in the future, possibly as a result of the comprehensive review to be conducted by the 118th Congress House Ethics Task Force. The Task Force will conduct the first comprehensive review of House Ethics Rules and Regulations in more than 30 years, and report recommended improvements to the bipartisan leadership.

Today, the Committee will order some bound copies of the 2022 PRINT Manual, but the updated online version will allow customers to access future updates as changes occur, more easily search the Manual online for relevant information, and print a current Manual at any time. In addition, the Committee is planning to help Members and staff more easily find the information they need, through significant improvements to its website.

The House Ethics Rules can be confusing and counterintuitive, and the Committee is working to provide new tools to help. To assist Members with calculating stock trade due dates if transactions and notifications occur on different days, the Committee developed and launched a new online tool called the Periodic Transaction Report Due Date Calculator at the beginning of this Congress. The Committee hired a web vendor to help with the launch, a step in planned improvements that will modernize the Committee's work.

The Committee is requesting an additional \$242,158 or another 5.4% increase in funding in 2024, to account for a planned larger staff and potential cost of living adjustments for existing staff to improve staff retention. Because the Committee's primary competition for government ethics lawyers is the Executive Branch, in recent years, we have attempted to target cost of living adjustments that are similar to those in the Executive Branch.

Please accept my appreciation for your time and your consideration of the Committee's requests.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Wild follows:]

**Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
Remarks by Committee on Ethics Ranking Member Susan Wild
March 1, 2023**

Good morning Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the Ethics Committee's ongoing work and our funding request for the 118th Congress.

I am pleased to be here this morning with Chairman Guest. Though we are relatively new to our respective roles as Chair and Ranking Member, this will be our third Congress serving together on the Ethics Committee. I look forward to continuing our work together in the same spirit of bipartisanship and collegiality that has traditionally prevailed on our Committee.

You invited us here this morning to discuss our budget, which as you know is one of the smallest of any House committee.

I expect that other Committee Chairs and Ranking Members who have appeared before you have likely asked for more funding. As you consider our Committee's request for a modest budget increase, I would urge you to consider how investments in the Ethics Committee can return great dividends for both the House community and the public.

As the Chairman discussed, the Ethics Committee is unique, not only for its evenly divided membership and nonpartisan professional staff, but also for the critical role we play in interpreting congressional ethics rules and administering the Code of Official Conduct.

While the Committee's investigative work often attracts press attention and news headlines, our advisory staff's guidance and training helps House Members and staff avoid those headlines and fulfill their ethical responsibilities. This outreach is particularly important with respect to the 78 new Members who are serving their first term in the House this Congress. This past November, our Committee was pleased to partner with yours, as we regularly do, to provide ethics training to incoming Members at New Member Orientation.

Looking ahead to the 118th Congress, we plan to build on our existing advice and education efforts through: continued improvements to – and investments in – our website; further updates to our Ethics Manual; and the creation of more specialized, accessible, and interactive training opportunities.

Our Committee's most valuable resource – our nonpartisan professional staff – is core to these efforts. Last Congress, the Committee spent about 90 percent of its budget on staff salaries. Staff hiring and retention

remains a challenge, particularly as we compete with the private sector and executive branch for attorneys with the specialized knowledge and experience we require.

When any of our colleagues or employees call the Committee seeking help on an urgent advice question, we want to guarantee they continue to receive the best and timeliest advice possible from our roster of Advice and Education attorneys.

Likewise, we must be able to recruit and retain talented and experienced investigative attorneys, so that we can resolve investigations thoroughly, fairly, and quickly, and maintain the House's and the public's confidence in our ability to self-regulate inquiries into alleged ethical violations.

Across Congresses, the Committee has consistently provided high-caliber service to the House community, even as our responsibilities have steadily increased. Our professional staff who are not attorneys play vital roles supporting all of this work.

In the 116th Congress, the House charged our Committee with developing new rules governing what positions Members and senior staff could hold with entities outside the House. I was pleased to chair the working group

that, with the nonpartisan staff's invaluable assistance, developed those outside position regulations.

Last Congress, the Committee was tasked with considering appeals from various fines imposed by the Sergeant at Arms—a responsibility that added significantly to our investigative team's workload.

Despite our Committee being short-staffed for much of 2021, the Committee's nonpartisan professional staff handled our increased workload with excellence and professionalism.

In the coming Congress, we look forward continuing our work helping the House community fulfill their ethical responsibilities. Already this Congress, the Committee has ensured that every new Member of the House has received ethics training. There have been 9 live ethics training sessions, with live ethics training provided to over 340 House employees.

The Committee has received nearly 60 requests for formal advisory opinions and has issued almost 50 formal advisory opinions. It has received almost 260 requests to accept privately sponsored travel and issued almost 160 letters approving that travel.

70

And finally, Committee staff have fielded more than 2,500 informal telephone calls, emails, and in-person requests for guidance on ethics issues.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today. We look forward to your questions.

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The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Chairman, on risk of cutting you off, I just want to make sure we are cognizant of time, and we will take your full extended remarks into the record.

I can feel your energy to make sure that this place is run in an ethical manner. We really appreciate the work. I don't think everybody always fully appreciates the time and efforts that go into Members who serve on Ethics, but, in particular, the Chair and the Ranking Member, the unique amount of time that you put in, in particular, Chairman Guest.

If alright, I am going to take the 5 minutes for the Chair and yield to Dr. Murphy for questions.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. Alright.

The CHAIRMAN. Then we will come back to—

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Guest, for coming here. This is difficult to ask hard questions to Ethics because God forbid I ever had to go before Ethics.

I just want to follow up. You have asked for a significant increase in funds. Can you elaborate a little bit into the uses and the needs for additional technology and how it is going to allow you to do your job better?

Mr. GUEST. Yes. One of the things that we are going to strive to is to—you know, we are required to provide annual training to Members of Congress, to staff. We would use this technology to bring some of that training into a modern-day era. Much of what we have done before—and I know you have been—sat through much of that training—I think has been very unhelpful where you have sat there and basically read rules and maybe answered a few questions.

We want to be able to bring in things that would help us with that training, to be able to have more presentations, to make it more engaging, to make it something that hopefully people will take away and remember some of that training versus just sitting through that training because they are required to do that as part of their annual educational requirements.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. You said you were going to basically look at rewriting the book—

Mr. GUEST. That is right. There is a task force that has been or will be established, and we will completely—

Mr. MURPHY. Do you anticipate additional funds being needed to do that, or are you using other funds that you normally would have used to do that with staff resources, et cetera?

Mr. GUEST. Well, we intended to use the staff resources that we have to assist the task force.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. One last question. It has to go really with modernization. How do you guys anticipate just talking about a little bit of follow-up you have with the Members? What does that look like? How does—how do I as a Member receive your message a little bit more clearly in—in the future in something that is a little bit more technologically savvy? What does that look like?

Mr. GUEST. Again, we are going to try to make as much information as possible available online. We are going to start developing a series of short videos that Members or staff members can watch of common questions. As we are putting forth the information, you

know, you will routinely get information that we send out on the pink sheet. Again, we do this as a way for this to stand out.

We are also putting things out there in different formats so that people can regularly understand that. One of the things that the committee is doing—and, again, this is low tech, and it is just developing checklists so that people have a better understanding of what the rules entail.

The rules are very much like—you know, there are rules, and then, with many rules, there are exceptions to the rules, such as the gift requirement. You know, Members of Congress can't accept gifts unless, and there are a long laundry list of what those exceptions—

Mr. MURPHY. What—Okay.

Mr. GUEST [continuing]. are. We want to make sure that information is available online and that information is understandable for all Members because our hope is that we are like the Maytag repairman, that we are sitting around with nothing to do and that we can focus, instead of on the investigative side, we can focus on the advice and the training.

Mr. MURPHY. Excellent.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all I have. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Morelle is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Guest, I just—I don't really have any questions. I appreciate your submission. I appreciate the hard work that you have to do, and I know that I speak for the members here that, for you and Ms. Wild, we are very grateful for your service.

With that, I yield back.

Mrs. TORRES. If I could ask a question?

Mr. MORELLE. I am sorry.

The CHAIRMAN. Please.

Mrs. TORRES. Hi, Chairman. Thank you for coming to our Committee.

I just want to ask about the 10 vacant positions that you have on the committee. Are you having a tough time hiring people, or is it just folks that recently left?

Mr. GUEST. Well, some of the vacancies are the fact that those positions are unfunded. We have recently lost three employees. One was appointed to the federal bench and was just recently confirmed. Two others have left at the end of the last calendar year to take, unfortunately, better-paying jobs.

You know, a lot of the staff members we have, have legal backgrounds, and so their salaries are going to be higher than people without those types of degrees, and so sometimes it has been difficult at times for us to attract good people with the salaries and the requirements that we are looking for. Right now, if I am not mistaken, I think we are only down three positions that are currently funded. Tom is nodding his head; that is correct.

Mrs. TORRES. Are you reassessing the salaries for the staff to ensure—I mean, I think you have two tough years ahead, lots of things up in the air. I just want to make sure that, you know, you are in a good place.

Mr. GUEST. Yes, ma'am. Part of the request is not only to hire additional staff but also to bring salaries up to a more competitive level.

Mrs. TORRES. Great. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Appreciate your time, Mr. Chairman. I know how much time and effort you put into Ethics, and it is greatly appreciated by this Committee and by the whole House. Thanks for participating in our work here to bring back regular order and transparency to the House.

Have a great afternoon.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Neal, thank you for joining us today. We are going to try to be efficient with your time. I will give each of you 5 minutes for an opening statement. You don't have to use the whole time. Your written statement will be inserted into the record. Myself and the Ranking Member then will each control a total of 5 minutes each for questions by the panel.

I will now recognize you, Chairman Smith. Thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JASON T. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Mr. Smith of Missouri. Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, members of the Committee, for having us and for the opportunity to appear before the House Administration Committee to discuss our funding request for the 118th Congress.

Americans watching the hearing should know that the Ways and Means Committee will be fighting to help workers, seniors, job creators, and others struggling with the various challenges facing the American economy.

Our committee will be focused on protecting American taxpayers and restoring transparency and accountability in their government, whether that be shedding more light on the IRS, whether it is looking at the Department of Health and Human Services and concerns over its plans to restrict Medicare coverage for innovative medications, whether it is the Treasury Department and its ongoing negotiations of an international tax agreement without congressional approval, the absence of a more robust trade policy at USTR that is needed to protect the interests of American workers.

Oversight over the IRS, an agency that has chronically damaged its own integrity and abused the trust of the American people, alone will consume a substantial amount of time and resources.

The Ways and Means Committee also has a broad jurisdiction over the health and retirement security of America's seniors, including Medicare and Social Security. These programs need to be protected.

These issues and others will mean this committee will need to spend substantial time executing on our oversight responsibility. Congress must serve as a check and balance against unrestrained executive power so that there is accountability and scrutiny of policies coming out of the White House.

The new House Republican majority has made it our commitment to act boldly on their behalf, and our committee—our committee, particularly the Ways and Means Committee, are the tip of the spear.

We will combat today's inflation crisis and looming debt crisis, secure our nation's supply chains and promote greater economic, financial, health, and energy security for American families.

When it comes to developing these solutions, we must humbly admit that we do not have all the answers here in Washington. As Chairman, I have made it a priority to take the Ways and Means Committee work outside the Halls of Congress, away from the politically connected voices of Washington lobbyists and into the communities of the American people, whose voices have for far too long been ignored.

We will hold field hearings across the country, and already held the first at the beginning of February in Petersburg, West Virginia. We heard from small business owners about their struggles as well as their solutions. We will be in Oklahoma City next Tuesday to learn more about how to provide relief and deliver results for working families.

More funding will be needed to ensure these voices, the voices of regular Americans, get heard, and so we can turn their ideas into policies that will make their lives better.

Additionally, the committee will need to recruit and hire staff with experience and expertise needed to both carry out our constitutionally required oversight duties, and also help legally craft the ideas brought back from our field hearings.

New pay orders in the House give us a competing shot at attracting some of the top minds, but now we need the resources to be able to meet the moment.

For all these concerns, the committee requests a 17-percent increase in our budget for 2023, and, because today's inflation crisis appears to be continuing to rage, as economists like Larry Summers and Jason Furman have warned, we request an additional 10 percent increase for 2024 in order to build on this year's work. We will look out for the American taxpayer, and our committee will respect the resources they give us to carry out our duties.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith of Missouri follows:]

Testimony at House Administration Committee
House Ways & Means Committee Funding for 118th Congress
Chairman Jason Smith (MO-08)
March 1, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle – thank you for the opportunity to appear before the House Administration Committee today to testify on the committee funding request for the House Ways and Means Committee for the 118th Congress.

Americans watching this hearing should know: The Ways and Means Committee will be fighting to help workers, seniors, job creators, and others struggling with the various challenges facing the American people today.

Our committee will be focused on protecting American taxpayers and restoring transparency and accountability in their government – whether that be shedding more light on the IRS and its history of targeting taxpayers for political purposes; the Department of Health and Human Services and concerns over its plans to restrict Medicare coverage for innovative medications; the Treasury Department and its ongoing negotiations of an international tax agreement without congressional approval; the absence of a more robust trade policy at USTR that is needed to protect the interests of American workers.

Oversight over the IRS – an agency that has chronically damaged its own integrity and abused the trust of the American people – alone will consume a substantial amount of time and resources.

The Ways and Means Committee also has a broad jurisdiction over the health and retirement security of America's seniors, including Medicare and Social Security. These programs need to be protected.

These issues and others will mean this committee will need to spend substantial time executing on our oversight responsibility.

Congress must serve as a check and balance against unrestrained executive power so that there is accountability and scrutiny of policies coming out of the White House.

Last November, the American people elected a Republican Majority in the House to hold government accountable and to address the many crises that families and small businesses are facing. The new House Republican majority has made it our commitment to act boldly on their behalf, and our committees, particularly the Ways and Means Committee, are the tip of the spear.

We will combat today's inflation crisis and looming debt crisis, secure our nation's supply chains, and promote greater economic, financial, health, and energy security for American families.

When it comes to developing these solutions, we must humbly admit that we do not have all the answers here in Washington. As chairman, I have made it a priority to take

the Ways and Means Committee's work outside the halls of Congress, away from the politically connected voices of Washington lobbyists, and into the communities of the American people whose voices have for too long been ignored. We will hold field hearings across the country, and already held the first at the beginning of February in Petersburg, West Virginia. We heard from small business owners about their struggles as well as their solutions. We will be in Oklahoma City next week to learn more about how to provide relief and deliver results for working families.

More funding will be needed to ensure these voices – the voices of regular Americans – get heard, and so we can turn their ideas into policies that will make their lives better.

Additionally, the committee will need to recruit and hire staff with experience and expertise needed to both carry out our Constitutionally required Oversight duties and also help legally craft the ideas brought back from our field hearings. New pay orders in the House give us a competing shot at attracting some of the top minds, but now we need the resources to be able to meet that moment.

For all these reasons, the Committee requests a 17 percent increase in our budget for 2023. And because today's inflation crisis appears to be continuing to rage as economists like Larry Summers and Jason Furman have warned, we request an additional 10 percent increase for 2024, in order to build on this year's work.

We will look out for the American taxpayer. And our committee will respect the resources they give us to carry out our duties.

Thank you for your time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Smith.
Ranking Member Neal, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. NEAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the Ranking Member as well. I noticed there are three members of the Ways and Means Committee here. I think we have got a shot.

Voice. Don't push it.

Mr. NEAL. We are in support of the Ways and Means Committee budget submission. We were consulted on this, and we are pleased that the Chairman sought our input. I think there is broad unity here.

I also want to acknowledge former Chairperson Zoe Lofgren for the increase in the last Congress. While previously we had received incremental increases, the Ways and Means Committee did receive an increase that put the allocation back to where it was in 2010.

For some of us who have a long memory, up until 1994, members of the Ways and Means Committee, they had an allocation for an individual tax attorney or a CPA in their offices that was paid for from the Ways and Means budget. I thought that was very helpful to attracting the sort of talent that comes with very complicated matters and very complicated issues.

Once that was eliminated, we saw kind of a downward spiral as to the funding for the committee, so we are grateful for what has happened recently. For the first time in over a decade, we were able to offer competitive salaries and staff increases.

I want to point something out as well. We worked with then minority Republicans and signed two letters with then Ranking Member Brady asking to dip into the reserve fund. This was a first for our committee. Both times, we gave the minority half instead of the usual one-third. We thought that was very important for comity and also for amicability, and we continue on that path in the minority as well.

We understand there is no such thing in a modern age as a permanent majority. We want to make sure that we continue to work together, again, on very technical issues.

Our workload has surpassed that for which we have been funded. The current majority has asked for an increase in order to support field hearings. If there are any lessons that the historic pandemic taught us, it was clear that we were able—able ourselves to hold virtual hearings that the committee might bring in witnesses to participate to make it a bit easier for the members, as they want to participate fully in this process.

I also would suggest that the Committee on Ways and Means has a long history of splitting the allocation at two-thirds/one-third, and, at this time, I am pleased to report that this will remain the practice.

It has been one place where both sides can come to an agreement, and I thank you all for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Neal follows:]

Talking Points
The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
March 1, 2023

- Good morning, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee; We are in support of the Ways and Means Committee budget submission.
- We were consulted as this budget was developed and had an opportunity for input. Thank you, Chairman Smith.
- I would like to thank Former Chairperson Zoe Lofgren for the increase last Congress. While previously receiving incremental increases, Ways and Means received an increase that put our allotment back to what it was in 2010. We still have a lot of work to do when funding Committees. It is now 2023.
- For the first time in over a decade, the Committee was able to offer competitive salaries and staff increases.
- We also worked with the then-Minority Republicans and signed on to two letters with then-Ranking Member Kevin Brady asking to dip into the Reserve Fund. This was a first for our Committee. Both times we gave the minority half instead of the usual 1/3. We hope that this amicability will continue into this and future Congresses.
- Our workload has always surpassed that for which we have been funded. The current Majority has asked for an increase in order to support field hearings. That was one thing the historic Pandemic taught us. We were able to hold virtual hearings that enabled the Committee to bring in witnesses to participate in our process from every walk of life without having to spend excess funds.
- The Committee on Ways and Means has a long history of splitting the allotment 2/3-1/3. At this time, I am pleased to report that this will remain the practice. This has been the one place where both sides can come to an agreement.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

The Chair now controls 5 minutes for the purposes of asking questions, and I will yield to Mr. Carey.

Mr. CAREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Neal, appreciate your testimonies.

Mr. Chairman, my question is going to be for you. You mentioned in your budget submission that the committee is planning on purchasing document management software for this Congress. Do you already know which document management software you will be purchasing? Are you in the process of researching different programs?

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. What we are looking at there is Relativity is the document that we are looking at purchasing.

Mr. CAREY. Okay. Okay. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have a question, Mr. Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, I sure do.

The CHAIRMAN. I yield to Mr. Murphy.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Chairman and Ranking Member, for serving on the most illustrious—second most illustrious committee—oh—

The CHAIRMAN. Correction noted.

Mr. MURPHY [continuing]. in Congress.

I thank you. We have important work to do, and I appreciate both of you putting your full force and effort into this. The committee is an important one for the well-being of this nation.

I do, in this time of budget overruns and budget deficits and impending debt ceilings, just want to make sure we are spending our money wisely, as I am sure you both do. It is not a question of this. It is noteworthy that we make sure that we understand that, as the Ways and Means Committee, we are held to, I think, a little bit higher standard of making sure that our money is spent correctly.

In that, I applaud the Chairman's desire to take our committee out into the country, and I think it is very, very important that people see the work that we are doing. I would like, though, to make sure that we are spending our money wisely. If you could speak to that, Chairman, just with these field hearings, these oversight hearings, to make sure that we are being good stewards of the taxpayer dollars, especially in these times of budget crisis.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Thank you, Representative.

Rest assured that we are attempting to spend diligently, appropriately on these field hearings. I do want to thank the House Admin Committee because our current field hearing that we are going to be having on Tuesday, you all were very helpful, because our first field hearing that we had in West Virginia, we were added—we had an extra expense of roughly \$10,000 because the House Recording Studio said no in coming 2 hours away, so we had to pay for it.

They tried to say it was because of the day that we were also in session that they would not be there. We have found it to be very convenient in fly in and fly out dates to do a field hearing, and so this one is also on Tuesday morning, and then we will fly back. You all helped accommodate that, which will save us at least

\$10,000, because the House Recording Studio is going to be a part of that hearing.

We are trying everything, but I also appreciate everything you all are doing to help with that.

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, sir. It is, you know, substantial. If you look at the number here, we are asking for essentially in this, 118th, a 30-percent increase over the last, 117th. That is a big number. Both goes with the Chairman and the Ranking Member that we make sure that our money is spent appropriately. I think it goes without saying that is an important thing for us, and we appreciate your diligence in that regard.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Appreciate your commitment to, in particular, doing the field hearings. I think it is really important to get outside of the echo chamber here in D.C., and we stand committed to making sure that we are supporting your committee but other committees as well that are going to be on the road this Congress and making sure that all the House entities are operating to the benefit of the committees but ultimately to the American people.

I will now yield 5 minutes to the Ranking Member.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Smith, thank you for being here. We had the privilege of serving together on the Budget Committee, and wish you all the best in your new responsibilities.

To Ranking Member Neal, who I think did an extraordinary job in your years as Chair, and appreciate all that you continue to do.

I am going to reserve time and yield to my colleague and friend and a member of the distinguished Ways and Means Committee, Ms. Sewell.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you so much, Mr. Ranking Member.

I want to welcome Chairman Smith and Chairman—oh, I have two chairmen—I am sorry—Ranking Member Neal for coming before the Committee. I too sit on this illustrious and one of the—you know, the oldest committee in Congress. We have huge responsibilities and jurisdictions that are under our watch.

I know that the budget has traditionally been two-thirds majority/one-third minority. Just want to assure—I think you said in your opening that you would honor that, but also that the Ranking Member would have unrestricted access to that budgeted amount?

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. So glad that you are on the best committee in Congress, too, Representative. But—

Ms. SEWELL. I have two best committees.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. The intention is to operate how we have always done in the past. You know, 6 weeks on the job, but definitely taking the guidance from the folks that have been in the past, and that is how it should be done.

Ms. SEWELL. Thanks.

Chairman Neal?

Mr. NEAL. Well, I think one of the things that we need to acknowledge—and I am supportive of the Chairman's request in the budget here, but these field hearings are going to be pricey. This was accomplished in the past through subcommittees traveling. Mr.

Mills, when he was the Chairman of the committee, he did not allow for subcommittees.

Then Mr. Rostenkowski became the Chairman and subcommittees were embraced. Then Mr. Archer stayed with it, and Mr. Archer actually, as the Chairman, he allocated time for the subcommittees to travel. The subcommittees, because I think in each instance, the subcommittees for a specific purpose, they generate an awful lot of expertise. I think it is helpful to the overall debate. Not to suggest for 1 second we don't want people to participate if they desire to, but this formerly was the role of subcommittees to participate in, and whether you are on the Tax Subcommittee or Health or Trade, I think that there is ample opportunity to pick, for example, key trade jurisdictions.

I mean, you might want to visit the Port of Louisiana in New Orleans, or you might want to visit the largest port in America, Los Angeles. I think, on the Tax Subcommittee, you might want to participate with taking a lot of questions across the heartland of the country.

I think there is ample opportunity for some specialties to be embraced. I do think that it is a reminder here that this is going to be costly as time goes on when you are moving a number of Members and staff across the country.

Ms. SEWELL. Well, thank you. I do know that you all enjoy a tradition of bipartisan support on this committee. It is critically important that we continue to embrace that. I know that both of you are committed to that.

I also would just like to put in a shameless plug for continuing our bipartisan health and—Rural and Underserved Communities Health Task Force, of which Arrington and Dr.—I just went blank—was a part of it. I think that is something that was very well done. Danny Davis was the member that I—and I was—I represented the rural part.

Look, I think that the idea of going to the heartland and going into—leaving the District and going straight to people is going to be very important. I too just want to make sure that we are utilizing our money wisely. I know it is the hope that it is truly bipartisan and we all participate.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

again, thank you both for being here today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Neal, thank you very much for being here.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Appreciate your transparency and commitment to returning to regular order.

Have a wonderful afternoon.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Meeks, thank you very much for being here. This is our commitment to making sure that we are returning the House to regular order and transparency for the American people.

We will give each of you up to 5 minutes for an opening statement. Myself and the Ranking Member then will each control 5 minutes total for questions from the panel.

Without ado, I will recognize Chairman McCaul for the purpose of an opening statement.

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

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify on the funding needs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs for this Congress along with my good friend, Ranking Member Meeks.

Before I outline our budget request, I want to briefly just tell you a little bit about the history of this committee. It goes back to the Continental Congress. Obviously France being an ally was a big issue. I find interesting Benjamin Franklin was the first Chairman along with Chairman Meeks. I am not making any comparison between Ben Franklin and the two of us, but I think it is very interesting from the historical standpoint.

It really emphasizes how important, though, the committee is. We deal with issues of war and peace. We deal with issues regarding the AUMF, declarations of war. We have oversight of State Department, USAID. We have export control jurisdiction. We sign off on all foreign military sales to our allies. Obviously, with the situation in Ukraine, we have been very busy on that front.

I believe that the world is becoming a more dangerous place as—before our eyes. All you have to do is turn the TV on to see what is happening. I just got back from the Ukraine, by the way—Kyiv and Bucha and Poland to see our—the Ukrainians being trained with the Leopard tanks to go in to fight Russian aggression.

We had the China spy balloon issue. Chairman and I, or Ranking Member and I had a—still trying to adjust to the majority—had a hearing on China and a markup, very bipartisan, with one exception, on China and the threat that they posed to the United States. Also, Iran, North Korea. The world is becoming, I think, more and more dangerous from our foreign adversaries.

We want to make sure America is safe, and we need to—we are the voice of foreign policy for the House of Representatives. We are respectfully requesting a 13-percent budget increase for this Congress. This increase is, in part—large part due to the creation of a seventh subcommittee, the Oversight and Accountability Subcommittee with the hiring of an additional four staffers for the majority and one for the minority, including several attorneys. We want to make sure that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely and identify where it is not.

We also would like to conduct field hearings that we can get into more detail. Since the pandemic, we haven't been able to do these, and I think it is important to go to our communities out there to show why the Foreign Affairs Committee is important, what we are doing.

We would like to hold our first one in New York with Ranking Member Meeks on the United Nations. We would also like to hold one in Texas on research and development for our weapons systems, defense industrial base; and another one on Miami, as Miami is really the gateway to Latin America.

We need to—we are going to be very focused on China and the strategic competition and the great power competition that we find ourselves in today.

We are witnessing right now the largest land invasion since World War II, and Chairman Xi and Putin are very much aligned. We are seeing threatening action from Chairman Xi with respect to Taiwan and the Pacific.

I hearken back to my dad's generation. He is a World War II veteran, bombardier in a B-17. I haven't seen a threat to the European Continent or Pacific area, region since that time, since World War II, and the threat is certainly there.

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

[The prepared statement of Mr. McCaul follows:]

Testimony of Chairman Michael T. McCaul
Before the Committee on House Administration
Re: 118th Congress Foreign Affairs Committee Funding Request
March 1, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on the funding needs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs for the 118th Congress, along with my good friend Ranking Member Meeks.

Before I outline our budget request for this Congress, let me briefly tell you about our Committee. The House Foreign Affairs Committee dates back to the Continental Congress with Benjamin Franklin as its first Chairman. This Committee deals with the issue of war and peace. We conduct State Department and USAID oversight and accountability, export controls, weapons sales to our allies, AUMFs and declarations of war.

There is no doubt that weakness invites aggression, and the world is becoming an increasingly dangerous place. Our constituents only have to turn on their TV or look at the newsfeed on their phone to see the daily horrors of Russian aggression, China overly spying on America or Iran killing innocent protestors and destabilizing the middle east. In these tumultuous times, this Committee has never been more relevant with the global challenges and the threats we face from our foreign adversaries. It is our job, regardless of party, to help ensure America is as safe as possible. And I am asking for your support to help us to the best job possible for our country and for our constituents.

We have a Constitutional duty to conduct vigorous oversight of the Executive branch. When we do our jobs, we ensure the American people are more confident in our institutions. We are respectfully requesting a 13 percent budget increase for 2023 and 2024. This increase is in large part due to the creation of a seventh subcommittee – the Oversight and Accountability Subcommittee and with the hiring of four additional staffers for the majority and at least one for the minority, including several attorneys. This subcommittee will be crucial to ensure taxpayer

dollars are spent correctly by identifying and rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse at the State Department and other agencies we oversee.

We'd also like to conduct Full Committee and Subcommittee field hearings, which hasn't been done in the last few years due to the pandemic. It's important that Members travel to our communities to show Americans how our policies abroad have consequences at home. For example, I plan to hold a full Committee hearing at the United Nations this year to discuss accountability and reform we all know are truly needed. We will also highlight the malign activities of China and Russia at this and other International Organizations – as you all here know, strategic competition is not just done across the oceans. We'd also like to increase Member and staff domestic travel, so that they can visit State and Commerce Department facilities to conduct a more hands on level of oversight the past few years have made more than challenging.

As we speak, the largest land war in Europe since World War II is being waged. And our adversaries – Putin in Russia, Xi in China, Kim in North Korea, and the Ayatollah in Iran – are trying to redraw the maps. They are endangering our service members, our constituents, our companies, and our allies. We are truly facing a struggle for the global balance of power. Our work this Congress must be more aggressive than ever to counter these rising threats.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
Ranking Member Meeks is now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Chairman Steil, and thank you, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of this Committee on House Administration. I thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Committee with Chairman McCaul in support of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs' budget request for the 118th Congress.

As Chairman McCaul has indicated, we are a very important—I know the other committee was in here, but we are the very important committee of the House giving out a message of the significance and importance of foreign affairs.

For example, in the 117th Congress, the Foreign Affairs Committee conducted unprecedented oversight and pushed an ambitious legislative agenda, including moving a State Authorization bill that was enacted for the first time in nearly two decades. Chairman McCaul has expressed through the committee oversight plan and the budget request an intention to pursue a State Authorization for this Congress—tremendously important—and an oversight agenda that includes adding a seventh subcommittee as well as robust plans for field hearings, as we have heard.

I look forward to this work and believe an increased budget would enable the staffing and supporting resources to maximize the quality and output of our efforts.

Our nation's national security interests are squarely at the center of the committee's jurisdiction at a time when global challenges will continue to require our most skilled staff and innovative thinking to reinforce our alliances and tackle issues like Russia's illegal war on Ukraine and strategic competition with China, as indicated by the Chairman, in deepening our diplomatic engagement in our hemisphere and on the continent of Africa.

The minority in the 117th Congress and by past practice controls one-third of the committee budget. I appreciate and thank the Chairman for his intention to honor that practice and allow me the autonomy to use the minority budget to best meet the unique needs that come with being in the minority. Unfortunately, because of a smaller budget, it makes it difficult to keep and have the talent that you need.

I will close with just this. In the post-9/11 era, diplomacy and development have regrettably not received the attention and resources they deserve. That must change. That is why I look forward to working with Chairman McCaul and with your help to have the resources needed to get that message through. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Meeks follows:]

Ranking Member Gregory W. Meeks
Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Funding for the 118th Congress
Wednesday, March 1, 2023

[REMARKS]

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee on House Administration, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee with Chairman McCaul in support of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs budget request for the 118th Congress.

In the 117th Congress, the Foreign Affairs Committee conducted unprecedented oversight and pushed an ambitious legislative agenda, including moving a State Authorization bill that was enacted for the first time in nearly two decades. Chairman McCaul has expressed through the Committee oversight plan and the budget request an intention to pursue a State Authorization this Congress and an oversight agenda that includes adding a seventh subcommittee, as well as robust plans for field hearings. I look forward to this work and believe an increased budget would enable the staffing and supporting resources to maximize the quality and output of our efforts.

Our nation's national security interests are squarely at the center of the Committee's jurisdiction at a time when global challenges will continue to require our most skilled staff and innovative thinking to reinforce our alliances and tackle issues like Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, strategic competition with China, and deepening our diplomatic engagement in our hemisphere and on the continent of Africa.

The minority in the 117th Congress, and by past practice, controls one third of the Committee budget. I appreciate that Chairman McCaul intends to honor that practice and allow me the autonomy to use the minority budget to best meet the unique needs that come with being in the minority. Unfortunately, because of a smaller budget and staff allotments in the minority, I was unable to retain many of the very talented staff that served so exceptionally in the 117th Congress. That reality has also meant that my remaining staff have taken on more responsibilities without the increased compensation that they deserve. They are highly skilled policy staff and lawyers with the technical skills required to meet the demands that come with the work of the committee. This budget increase would allow me to compensate the staff for their work, hire additional staff to cover the issues, and importantly, retain talented employees.

In the post 9/11 era, diplomacy and development have regrettably not received the attention and resources they deserve. That must change. That is why, as Chairman, I worked to elevate the visibility and importance of the Foreign Affairs Committee. If we are to avoid wars, counter global threats, expand our soft power, and increase America's competitiveness and global standing, there is no committee of greater importance than HFAC. Having the resources to do the important work the American people expect us to do requires a budget that can support the high expectations we have set.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. The Chair and the Ranking Member will now each control 5 minutes from the Chair's time.

Chairman McCaul, if I can ask you, looking back at last Congress, the total travel budget, I think, in actual expenditures was about \$19,000. This year, you talked a little about how you want to utilize travel getting out of Washington, DC, \$140,000.

Can you dive into a little bit more about the importance of that and where you are looking at going inside of that? We spend a lot of time on this Committee thinking about how we are going to support the vast number of committees that are going to actually travel outside of Washington because it is really important. We just had a conversation with Chairman Smith with Ways and Means about some opportunities for improvement. Can you just give us a little more color—

Mr. MCCAUL. Yes. You know, because of COVID, we didn't really have a chance to do this. That is why we asked for an increase. I think it is important. I mean, these are the issues really facing the nation of war and peace. I think the American people deserve to know from their elected Representatives what we are doing and engaging in foreign policy and how that impacts us here at home: Why is Ukraine important? Why is Taiwan important? Why are we doing the things we are doing overseas?

I think, again, the first trip we outlined was to New York. I think the United Nations is a very—kind of a logical first step. I think Miami to look at what is happening in Latin America, the threat of China and the Chinese expansion. We have the migration phenomenon. We would like to look at how we can impact Central America, for instance—Mrs. Torres—in terms of private investment.

This committee, with the State Department, we have the Development Finance Corporation, and we look at ways to get private investment in areas like Africa, as the Ranking Member mentioned, but also Central America where we can raise the economies of scale that can help get to the root cause of problem of why are people fleeing Central and Latin America to come to the United States. I think that would be an important hearing.

Finally, our defense industrial base is broken. As you look at the weapons going into Ukraine and the ones—I signed off on four military sales 3 years ago to go into Taiwan that have yet to go in country, in theater. That is primarily because our defense industrial base is broken.

We want to have a hearing that deals with not only semiconductors with the CHIPS Act that, you know, we were able to pass bipartisanly but talk about how we can look at hypersonic weapons, how we can look at the development of new weapon systems that this country needs if we are going to defend ourselves from the rising tide of threats that we see primarily from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. The work you guys are going to have in front of you over the next 2 years is absolutely essential for the sake of the country, and I appreciate the work you guys are doing in that regard.

I will now yield 5 minutes to the Ranking Member.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Meeks, for being here. I appreciate your work.

I always appreciate my friend Greg Meeks, who I think represents the United Nations because Queens is like the United Nations. I appreciate both of your service.

I do also want to echo what others have said and so appreciate. In an increasingly dangerous world, the more that we present a unified front to the world internationally about what America's priorities are, what our values are, and our complete commitment to democracy and self-governance and respecting the wishes of sovereign people is so important. You know, I want to just continue to thank you for your bipartisan work in what I—as I said, is an increasingly dangerous world.

Thanks for the budget request. We are obviously, I think, grateful that you have an agreement between the two members on expenditures.

In your submission, Mr. Chairman, you indicated that you didn't have any plans to change the self-determination on the minority in terms of spending their allocation. I just want to confirm that I understand that and appreciate your willingness to continue to respect that—

Mr. MCCAUL. Sure.

Mr. MORELLE [continuing]. that division. I gather we can rely on your commitment to do that.

Mr. MCCAUL. Of course, yes.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes.

To the Ranking Member, any—you have confidence that has continued to be the case and will continue to be the case?

Mr. MEEKS. Yes, no—Mr. McCaul, you know, we, not only as Chair and Ranking Member this go and the reverse last time—we developed a friendship. We have worked closely together to try to make sure we understand diplomacy, and we understand that at home and abroad. His commitment, his word, it means everything. He has always given that word, and we have always, likewise, tried to make sure. I have absolutely no hesitation, no doubt in my mind, about his commitment to make sure that we continue that one-third/two-thirds piece.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you. I am going to reserve and just—

Mr. MCCAUL. What you said is very important. Look, we are not going to agree on anything, but we will agree to disagree. I think when it comes to foreign policy, I always say it stops at the water's edge. I just think it is important, if we are going to send a message to our adversaries, that we try to be as united as possible. I think we have done that. I think the Ranking Member and I have attempted to do that, you know, over the years.

I think the 419 to zero vote on the spy balloon was another good example of how—a united voice is always better than a divided one because they love to see us divided along political lines—China would, and Russia—and I don't want to fall into that trap.

Mr. MORELLE. No, I completely agree. You know, as you said, there is going to be differences between us. There will be differences even within our own ranks. You know, each party has differences of opinion on how to do this. Ultimately, just recognizing

the outside world, despite our differences, despite our challenges, we are unified in purpose about what the role of the United States is in the world and how we see the world order.

Mr. MEEKS. Can I just say to that—because, especially post-9/11, you know, where diplomacy and development have regrettably not received the kind of attention and resources that I think that they deserve—and I believe that we are going to avoid wars and global threats and expand our soft power. That is what we do here. Increase America's competitiveness and global standing. There is no committee—zero, none—of greater importance to do that than HFAC.

Mr. MORELLE. I would just say—and I am going to yield to my friend, Mrs. Torres, I also think that, in a world where we need to communicate the complexity of international relations, that things that might not be immediately obvious to the average citizen is really important. The two of you and the other members of the committee have a real responsibility to educate people about the real multidimensional elements of foreign policy and how to protect our interest even at times when there may be—that people think there is a much simpler answer. I appreciate that.

I do want to yield to Mrs. Torres.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you. I just want to thank both of you for being the face of Congress abroad and to ask that, as you continue to travel abroad, that, you know, we really need to focus and bring more people to the table to talk about the issue of refugees. It is a global issue that we must work together globally to address.

The other thing, I want to thank you for hosting HDP and continuing to support HDP.

With that, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Meeks, thanks for being here today. This is our commitment to return to regular order. Your testimony is helpful for us as we go to mark up the budgets next week. Thank you both for being here, and have a wonderful afternoon.

To members of the Committee, I want to thank you for all the work over the last 2 days.

I also want to insert and seek unanimous consent that the written testimonies of the Chair—of Vice Chair Luetkemeyer, as well as Ranking Member Velázquez of the Committee on Small Business, will be made part of the record. Due to the votes, they were unable to attend today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Williams for Mr. Luetkemeyer follows:]

**Testimony of Chairman Roger Williams
Before the Committee on House Administration
March 1, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of this committee for giving us the opportunity to testify on the Committee on Small Business's Budget request.

As a small business owner for over 50 years, I am honored to serve as Chairman of the House Committee on Small Business and testify before you as an advocate for Main Street.

For the 118th Congress, the House Committee on Small Business is asking for a \$500,000 increase to the Committee's budget request from the previous Congress.

This requested increase is due to a variety of factors. First, the Committee is seeking to step up its work in oversight of the Biden Administration. While the Committee's legislative jurisdiction is small, our oversight purview touches all agencies that make regulations that effect small businesses. With a more sufficient budget, the Committee will be able to conduct the robust oversight of the Executive Branch that we are planning on doing for the next 2 years.

To do this effectively, the Committee is looking to add multiple counsel positions to the staff roster. Our committee is not alone in our efforts to increase our oversight capacities, and to compete for talent with the larger and committees, we will need a larger budget to fill these roles. Just last week, we sent letters to 25 agencies to ask about the compliance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act, which is a law meant to insulate small businesses from the most damaging regulations. In the past 2 years, the SBA's non-partisan office of Advocacy has found 27 violations of this law. Federal agencies have not been taking their legal obligations seriously, and small businesses have been the ones who have been negatively impacted and left to fend for themselves. The Committee hopes to find ways to strengthen this law to protect our nations job creators. The more resources and lawyers we can dedicate to this project, the better outcome we think will occur for small businesses.

Compared with other committees, the Committee on Small Business is a very lean operation. In the 117th Congress, the staff ceiling was set at 42 people for the Committee, with two thirds going to the majority, and one third for the minority. However, the staffing ceiling was never close to being reached because the Committee's budget has never being realistic to hit those numbers. Last year, the average number of combined staff for both the majority and minority was 22 people. In order to avoid high burnout rates among staffers and prevent turnover, an increase in the committee's budget would allow us to an adequate amount of people to fulfill our commitment to America's job creators.

In addition to staffing the Committee on Small Business, many our members have expressed interest in holding field hearings in their districts. As the Committee representing Main Street

America, oftentimes the best way to reach these constituencies is by going to them directly. Very few of our members are within driving distance to Washington, so these hearings would entail additional costs.

We need a budget that respects the needs of main street. Our nation's entrepreneurs and innovators deserve a strong and robust advocate fighting on their behalf in Washington. Small businesses are the backbone of our country's economy and communities. Increasing the Committee's budget will help amplify the voice of small business throughout the entirety of the federal government.

Thank you for your time and I sincerely appreciate your consideration to the Committee's budget request.

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[The prepared statement of Ms. Velázquez follows:]

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
 2561 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515-0515

Statement of Ranking Member Nydia M. Velázquez
 Committee on House Administration Full Committee Hearing:
 “Committee Funding for the 118th Congress”
 March 1, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle and all the members of the committee. I really appreciate the opportunity to discuss the budget submission for the Small Business Committee in the 118th Congress.

Let me echo what I have said time and again in this forum and in others: small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. That was proven during the Great Recession and again during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee on Small Business was called upon to ensure the stability of the nation’s small business community and the many jobs they support in our local communities. Our committee responded quickly to create several historic emergency programs – the largest in history – to be a lifeline for businesses of various sizes and even nonprofits. Our staff, one of the smallest in the House, worked tirelessly during and after the pandemic to do right by small employers. I am also proud to be the only committee in Congress to have held an in-person hearing at the height of the start of the pandemic. As a matter of fact, it was a Member Day hearing where 44 of our House colleagues testified in addition to the 24 Members of the Small Business Committee who shared their stories of how the pandemic and response programs impacted their districts.

Our work has continued since then to oversee each of those programs in conjunction with authorized SBA programs to protect taxpayer dollars. In the past two Congresses, we held numerous hearings with the Government Accountability Office and the SBA Office of the Inspector General, as well as the Department of Treasury and the SBA. In fact, our oversight efforts increased last Congress – primarily in an effort to work with the IG and DOJ to hold bad actors accountable for fraud in covid programs. In that vein, we enacted two bills that gave the DOJ and other investigative agencies additional time to prosecute fraud in the PPP and Covid-EIDL programs. These laws were the product of the robust bipartisan oversight conducted by our committee.

The committee not only has jurisdiction over the Small Business Administration, but we are often relied upon by our nation’s small businesses to look out for their best interests. From health care to taxes, energy to capital access, contracting to technology, agriculture to trade, these are just a few of the issues that Chairman Williams and I, along with our members, must delve into. I am committed to working with the chairman on these issues and more.

But this work does require an investment by Congress. The committee needs to be funded at such a level where it allows us to do our work with sufficient resources and without having to sacrifice our staff. Historically, this committee has been underfunded, with the effects of sequestration compounding the situation in years past. Nevertheless, the Minority continues to keep operational expenses at a minimum, all the while being understaffed. The slots are there, but the funds simply are not. I'm proud of the work we've been able to do these last few Congresses and it is even more of an achievement to have done so much with so little. We have operated efficiently and effectively but I do ask for a minimal increase to ensure we can properly oversee these programs, which will require years of work.

It goes without saying that Chairman Williams and I, along with our committee members, plan to continue working together in a bipartisan manner to fulfill our jurisdictional responsibility. We know the task at hand that you have in reviewing the numbers, but we ask that you do so with the utmost consideration. A very modest increase that the Chairman is requesting will go a long way in helping the committee hire staff, upgrade our oversight technologies, and restart our field hearings to meet our members and their constituents to truly serve their needs.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. As I mentioned yesterday, conducting these hearings is one of the most impactful roles of the Committee. I think the staff in particular did a spectacular job, both the majority and minority side of House Administration, to keep this moving. We applaud all of the hard work that went in by the full team.

Without objection, each Member, including our witnesses, will have 5 legislative days to insert additional remarks 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 12:11 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

