

**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2025**

HEARINGS

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H.R. 8772/S. 4678

AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH FOR
THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

**Architect of the Capitol
Congressional Budget Office
Government Accountability Office
Government Publishing Office
Library of Congress
United States Capitol Police
United States Senate Sergeant at Arms**

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CONTENTS

HEARINGS

	Page
WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024	
Government Accountability Office	1
Honorable Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General:	
Prepared Statement of	6
Statement of	4
Government Publishing Office	1
Honorable Hugh N. Halpern, Director:	
Prepared Statement of	15
Statement of	15
Congressional Budget Office	1
Honorable Dr. Phillip Swagel, Director:	
Prepared Statement of	23
Statement of	21
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2024	
Library of Congress	45
Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress:	
Prepared Statement of	49
Statement of	48
Architect of the Capitol	45
Joseph Dipietro, Acting Architect of the Capitol:	
Prepared Statement of	62
Statement of	61
WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024	
United States Senate Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper	75
Honorable Karen H. Gibson:	
Prepared Statement of	79
Statement of	78
United States Capitol Police	75
Chief J. Thomas Manger, Chief of Police:	
Prepared Statement of	85
Statement of	84
BACK MATTER	
List of Witnesses, Communications, and Prepared Statements	101
Subject Index:	
Architect of the Capitol	103
Congressional Budget Office	103
Government Accountability Office	103
Library of Congress	103
United States Senate Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper	104
United States Capitol Police	104

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:39 p.m., in room SD-124, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed (Chairman), presiding.

Present: Senators Reed, Murphy, Van Hollen, and Fischer.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Good afternoon. The subcommittee will come to order. I'd like to welcome everyone to the first of our fiscal year 2025 budget hearings for the Legislative Branch Appropriation Subcommittee. I would also like to welcome Ranking Member Fischer, when she arrives, with whom I work very closely with. She's an extraordinary partner in our efforts. I'm looking forward to continuing our work together and with other Members of this Committee.

Today, we have with us the Government Accountability Office Comptroller General, Gene Dodaro, Government Publishing Office Director, Hugh Halpern, and Congressional budget office Director, Phillip Swagel. I would like to thank you for joining us here today to testify on your agencies' 2025 budget. I ask unanimous consent that the witness's written statements be placed in the hearing record.

Let me begin by again thanking the women and men of your agencies who work every day to facilitate the work of the Senate and the Congress. Without each of them, the Senate would not be able to perform its constitutional responsibilities on behalf of the American people.

The Legislative Branch agencies have submitted fiscal year 2025 budget requests. They account for a \$544 million increase over the fiscal year 2024 Legislative Branch enacted appropriation. While we do not yet have subcommittee allocations, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 enacted strict levels for appropriations, again, in fiscal year 2025.

As such, we'll be making very difficult decisions for the allocation of resources provided to the Legislative Branch in fiscal year 2025. It will then fall upon the heads of each legislative branch agency to utilize those resources to meet their respective missions while addressing the needs of their workforce. This will not be an easy fiscal year, but I'm confident that the Legislative Branch can meet this challenge.

For fiscal year 2025, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is requesting \$915.9 million in appropriated funds, which is an increase of \$104 million over the fiscal year 2024 enacted level. This request would support a funded staffing level of 3,600 positions to fill critical skill gaps and fulfill GAO's mission to support Congress.

It's important to note that the return on investment over the past 5 years is \$113 for each \$1 spent on GAO. The agencies' request continues the work of GAO's Science Technology Assessment and Analytics Team, which provides Congress with critical foresight and oversight of science and technology issues in a rapidly changing world.

In fiscal year 2025, this includes ongoing and future work in aspects of artificial intelligence in both defense and civilian applications, regenerative medicine, medical research, and many other critical areas. The requested increase also prioritizes reporting on government-wide cybersecurity capabilities.

This will continue GAO's assessment of multiple cybersecurity priorities such as the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure, and the security of Federal information systems. The GAO performs critical work on behalf of the Senate, and I look forward to hearing from Comptroller General Dodaro on his agency's work.

Today, we'll also be reviewing the Government Publishing Office's request. The GPO is seeking appropriation of \$136 million of fiscal year 2025, which is an increase of \$4 million over the fiscal year 2024 enacted level. The request for the Congressional Publishing Account remains at the fiscal year 2024 enacted level of \$83 million.

The agency is requesting an increase of nearly \$4.3 million for the public information programs of the superintendent documents account to meet mandatory pay price level increases and the cost of digitizing printed materials for easier access by the public.

Additionally, the agency is requesting funding to support the continued development and operations of the GovInfo and XPub systems. The work that the agency performs on a daily basis of the center is critical, and again, I look forward to the director's testimony.

And we'll also hear from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The CBO plays an important non-partisan role as it strives to provide clear, and objective, timely analysis and reporting on budgetary and economic information for the Congress. The agency is requesting \$73.5 million in fiscal year 2025, which is an increase of \$3.5 million over fiscal year 2024 enacted levels.

This increase provides for the salary and benefit of the agency's workforce, and to fund a slight increase in staff to continue to im-

prove the responsiveness of the agency to the Congress, so that legislative work can be informed by the important information provided by the CBO.

Director Swagel and I have discussed the agency's efforts to provide timely responses to Congressional requests and other important work the CBO is conducting to meet its mission. I look forward to hearing from Director Swagel about the CBO's work.

With this said, the goal of the Senate Appropriations Committee is continue on a normal order for appropriations bills. As such, this subcommittee will be aggressively working to produce a thoughtfully crafted bill that can be considered by the full Committee and the Senate in the coming months. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses, and to working with Senator Fischer—who with precise timing has arrived. So I may recognize her. Again, completely dependable, and thoroughly in tune with the temple of the United States Senate.

Senator, I will recognize you for your comments. Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DEB FISCHER

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman voted quicker than I did. He scurried down there and got there ahead of me. But thank you all, I appreciate you being here today, and I look forward to working with Chairman Reed on the ability to craft a fiscally responsible bill that will meet the needs of Congress and our support agencies this year. I thank our three witnesses for appearing before the subcommittee today and for your testimony.

Before I discuss the specific details of your budget requests, I want to build upon Chairman Reed's comments regarding this upcoming fiscal year. In fiscal year 2024, the Legislative Branch's allocation was an over 2 percent cut from the enacted funding level. Under the terms of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, another reduction for our bill is possible this year.

As we face an uncertain fiscal year, and the potential of further cuts, legislative branch agencies need to be judicious stewards of the resources. After years of significant spending increases, the Federal Government as a whole must now exercise more fiscal restraint. The Legislative Branch will be no exception to that rule.

Mr. Dodaro, the Government Accountability Office holds an important role in providing oversight of government spending and preventing waste in Federal programs. For fiscal year 2025, the GAO seeks an increase of \$104 million in appropriated funding. This is a substantial request. I'd like to hear from you what is driving that need, and how you plan to maintain current services in this difficult fiscal year?

Dr. Swagel, the Government Budget Office's fiscal year 2025 request focuses on personnel costs and sustaining current IT capacity. In your testimony, I hope to hear how CBO is managing personnel-related costs, and how your agency is working to improve CBO's forecasting accuracy and transparency.

Mr. Halpern, the Government Publishing Office's request will support the continued transition to digital products and technologies. This will achieve savings while also increasing accessi-

bility for the American public. I look forward to learning more about these efforts in your testimony.

Again, thank you to our witnesses for being here today, and I hope to have a productive conversation on these budget proposals.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer. I will now ask our witnesses—and we'll begin with Comptroller General Dodaro, then Director Halpern, and then Director Swagel—to give brief opening statements. No more than 5 minutes, and you all should understand that your full text of your remarks is already in the record.

Comptroller General, you're recognized.

THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

STATEMENT OF HON. GENE DODARO, COMPTROLLER GENERAL, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. DODARO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer. It's good to be with you this afternoon. I'm pleased to be here to talk about our fiscal year 2025 budget request.

First, I want to thank the Subcommittee and both of you for your support in the past. I believe we've returned a good return on investment as a result of your confidence in us. Last year, as a result of implementation of our recommendations, over \$70 billion accrued to the Federal Government in financial benefits. Our return on investment over the last 6 years is \$133 for every \$1 invested in us. We're helping to make government more efficient and effective through our oversight.

Demand for our services remains high. We do work for over 93 percent of the standing committees of the Congress. In addition to our support for the committees, we're also receiving more and more requests for technical assistance from individual member offices, particularly in science and technology, as well as other areas.

This year so far, for the first half of the year, we've filled the technical requests from over 215 Members offices and committees. I'm very pleased to be able to provide this service. I think it's important too, as there's been quite a bit of turnover in the Congress. We're a reservoir of institutional knowledge that can provide advice and support in helping the Congress carry out its responsibilities.

Our request for 2025 would maintain the staffing of GAO at what we're going to end fiscal year 2024 with. With Congress's support, we've built up our capacity, particularly at Congress's encouragement, in the science, technology, and analytics area, as well as the national security area. These areas are very important.

In the national security area, the most recent NDAA had 115 mandates for GAO studies. We're looking at mission-readiness issues, particularly given the competition with China and Russia. We are also reporting on the development of major weapons systems as well as the modernization of the nuclear weapons complex. We're also tracking funding to the Ukraine, both in terms of military assistance as well as humanitarian assistance.

In the science technology area, we're doing a lot of work on artificial intelligence. We have work underway in generative AI, both in

terms of what's going on in the commercial sector, as well as the implications for both the workforce and the environment as well as other areas.

We also have work in a number of different areas, including regenerative medicine and in the medical applications area, like the development of antivirals for future pandemics. In addition we are reporting on hypersonic weapons with the DOD and other technical areas. We're also doing work on the Columbia-class nuclear submarine.

We are looking into fraud. There has been epic fraud during the pandemic. By our latest estimate between \$233 and \$521 billion was lost to fraud, and annually between 2018 and 2022. And we have a lot of efforts underway to help the government prevent fraud from occurring in the future.

Healthcare is another area the Federal government is spending a lot of money on: 29 percent of Federal program spending goes to Medicare and Medicaid. Last year, however, there was over \$100 billion reported in improper payments in Medicare and Medicaid. We have a number of recommendations to get the improper payment rate lower and under control.

In cybersecurity, I'm particularly concerned about critical infrastructure protections. There is a lot of concern now about China targeting our water systems and electricity grid systems. The Federal Government really does not have enough knowledge about the status of those areas because standards are voluntary for the private sector to implement.

Lastly, I want to compliment the GAO workforce, our dedicated talented people. For the last 3 years running we've been designated the best place to work in government for mid-size Federal agencies. That helps us attract and retain the caliber of people we need to take on these difficult assignments from the Congress.

I'm very, very pleased. I know you'll give careful consideration to our request. I know there are difficult decisions ahead. So, thank you for your attention. I'd be happy to answer your questions at the appropriate time.

[The statement follows:]



United States Government Accountability Office

Testimony
Before the Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch, Committee on
Appropriations, United States Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 2:30 p.m. ET
Wednesday, May 8, 2024

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

U.S. Government Accountability Office

Statement of Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-107527](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate

Background

GAO's mission is to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. We provide nonpartisan, objective, professional and reliable information to Congress, federal agencies, and to the public. GAO recommends hundreds of improvements across the full breadth and scope of the federal government's responsibilities.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, GAO issued 671 products, and 1,345 new recommendations. Congress used our work extensively to inform its decisions on key fiscal year 2023 and 2024 legislation.

Since fiscal year 2002, GAO's work has resulted in over:

- \$1.38 trillion dollars in financial benefits; and
- Over 28,000 program and operational benefits that helped to change laws, improve public safety, and promote sound management throughout government.

As a non-partisan, fact-based service organization, GAO is committed to providing program and technical expertise to support Congress. This includes crafting legislation; overseeing the executive branch; evaluating government programs, operations, and spending priorities; and assessing information from outside parties.

View [GAO-24-107527](#). For more information, contact A. Nicole Clowers at (202) 512-4400 or clowersa@gao.gov.

May 8, 2024

FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

U.S. Government Accountability Office

What GAO Found

In fiscal year 2023, GAO's work yielded \$70.4 billion in financial benefits, a return of about \$84 for every dollar invested in GAO. Our average return on investment for the past 6 years is \$133 to \$1. In 2023 we also identified 1,220 other benefits that led to improved services to the American people, strengthened public safety, and spurred improvements across the government. GAO's High Risk Series this past year resulted in \$32.9 billion in financial benefits and 468 program and operational improvements. GAO is also helping advance agencies' efforts and related Congressional oversight to prevent, detect, and respond to fraud, waste, and abuse. For instance, in FY 2023 we estimated that the amount of unemployment insurance fraud during the COVID-19 pandemic was likely between \$100 billion and \$135 billion.

For our fiscal year 2025 budget, GAO is requesting \$916.0 million in appropriated funds and \$59.8 million in offsets and supplemental appropriations. This will maintain 3,600 full-time equivalents (FTE). These resources will enable GAO to continue to meet the priority needs of the Congress including five key areas of importance to the nation and Congress:

- **National Security Enterprise.** GAO evaluates an array of national security efforts in areas such as military readiness, space programs, and the U.S. nuclear complex.
- **Fraud Prevention.** We examine government efforts to safeguard programs from fraud by focusing agencies more on prevention.
- **Science and Technology.** GAO's growing portfolio of ongoing and future work includes many aspects of artificial intelligence, medical research and applications, critical minerals recovery, and quantum computing.
- **Cybersecurity.** GAO assesses the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the cybersecurity of 16 critical infrastructure sectors across the U.S., and the security of federal information systems.
- **Health Care Costs.** GAO examines the sustainability and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, Veterans Affairs, DOD, and Indian Health Service health care services.

Our fiscal year 2025 budget request also supports GAO's IT modernization and space optimization efforts. We will transition processes to Cloud Services and enhance cybersecurity. This will allow GAO to grow in agility and better engage IT Modernization strategies. In addition, we will advance space optimization projects to increase leasable space in headquarters and decrease leased space in the field. We will also continue addressing a maintenance backlog at the headquarters building.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee,

I want to express my appreciation for this Subcommittee's support. With your help GAO has made great progress in saving federal funds, meeting congressional priorities, and improving government performance and accountability. Over the past 20 years our work has generated more than \$1.3 trillion in financial benefits, a return of \$113 on every dollar invested in GAO. In addition, in FY 2023 we recorded 1,220 other benefits resulting from our work across government as well as enhancements to national security and public safety. For example, the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) contained over 50 provisions that reflected GAO's recommendations across important areas, including cybersecurity, military housing, commercial satellite imagery capabilities, and special operations forces skills and competencies.

I am fully confident that the FY 2025 budget request will enable us to continue providing timely and high-quality support to the Congress and help improve government. Demand for GAO work remains high. The 2024 NDAA alone included 115 mandates for GAO. In FY 2023, we received 647 requests from 93 percent of the standing committees representing a broad range of congressional interests. We issued 670 products, made 1,345 new recommendations, and we achieved a 94 percent on-time delivery rate.

In 2023 we issued our 13th annual report on ways to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication and achieve other efficiencies. We identified 100 new recommendations in addition to the 1,782 suggestions from prior reports. As of April 2023, the Congress and federal agencies had fully addressed 1,239 and partially addressed 144 of these suggestions yielding about \$600 billion in financial benefits.

In addition, Congress has sought GAO oversight of the federal funds provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act, and previously provided Ukraine assistance. As of March 2024, we have issued 20 IIJA reports which contained 46 recommendations. In addition, we have over 20 ongoing reviews examining issues related to the Inflation Reduction Act and oversight of Ukraine assistance.

Along with countless briefings to congressional staff and Members, we provided expert testimony 57 times before 32 separate committees or subcommittees in FY 2023. Moreover, in the first two quarters of FY

2024, we have already provided more than 435 instances of technical assistance to over 215 committees and congressional offices. In FY 2023, GAO also sent 34 staff to work on 16 Congressional committees and 7 subcommittees for a limited time. We have received much appreciation and compliments from Congress for all these services.

We consistently deliver high quality products and services for Congress and the American people because of our talented, professional, and dedicated staff. Given the broad scope of issues the Congress relies on us to investigate and audit, our employees' collective expertise ranges from the hard sciences to public policy and administration to information technology, economics, law, financial auditing and much more. We also have people that possess deep subject area knowledge of virtually all major facets of government from defense to health care to natural resource management, for example.

We successfully recruit and retain highly qualified staff from a wide range of disciplines because we are a premier employer in the federal government. In March 2023, the Partnership for Public Service ranked GAO as first among mid-size federal agencies as a "best place to work" for the third year in a row based on our employees' views.

In September 2023 a Future of Work agreement was reached with GAO Employees Organization, IFPTE Local 1921. The agreement, which builds off GAO's longstanding flexible work, voluntary transfer, and telework policies, prioritizes and ensures that GAO: 1) continues to meet its mission in serving the Congress; 2) maintains expertise, independence, and quality in our work; 3) provides flexibility for a productive work environment; and 4) establishes equitable pay scales for employees in different locations. The agreement covers standard and core business hours, flexible work arrangements, voluntary transfers, and workspace assignment. Also, an updated pay system covers employees approved to change their Official Duty Station through remote work or a voluntary transfer to a different GAO office.

Fiscal Year 2025 Request

For FY 2025 GAO is requesting \$916.0 million in appropriated funds, a 12.8 percent increase over FY 2024 levels, and the use of \$59.8 million in offsets and supplemental appropriations. The FY 2025 budget request maintains GAO staffing at the 3,600 FTE level enacted for FY 2024 and reflects the impact of the reduced use of offsets as well as the winding down of supplemental funds.

The request will allow us to continue to meet the priority needs of the Congress. These priorities include five key areas of importance to the nation and Congress where we have focused on expanding our capabilities in recent years. Specifically,

- **National Security Enterprise.** The United States is faced with a wide range of global strategic and domestic terrorism challenges. For example, China and Russia employ economic, technological, informational, and military tools to undermine U.S. interests. The latest U.S. *National Security Strategy* emphasizes the importance of stronger American power and influence including a more modern U.S. military. To assist the Congress in monitoring how the government is addressing these significant challenges, GAO evaluates federal efforts across the spectrum of global national security activities, including military readiness, space programs, and the U.S. nuclear complex.

On the domestic front, terrorism threats have expanded from externally directed plots to attacks carried out by both homegrown violent extremists inspired by foreign terror organizations, and by what the FBI identifies as self-radicalized domestic terrorists. GAO assists congressional oversight of government counterterrorism efforts by evaluating FBI and DHS activities and progress in implementing open GAO recommendations.

- **Fraud Prevention.** The unprecedented amount of fraud in pandemic programs highlighted the urgent need for better implementation of leading practices for fraud risk management, identified in GAO's 2015 *A Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs*. This framework is now embedded in legislation and OMB circulars. Since then, we have examined the extent to which over 40 agencies or program offices are adhering to leading practices to safeguard their programs from fraud—in normal operations and emergencies. As GAO reported in November 2023, we have made 173 recommendations to better manage fraud risks. We also plan to issue a government-wide estimate of fraud in 2024.
- **Science and Technology.** Innovations in science and technology produce transformative change, sometimes with tremendous benefits to the U.S. economy, individuals, and society. For example, Artificial Intelligence (AI) may have the potential to transform virtually all sectors of American life by accelerating decision-making and automating monotonous tasks. However, such change can also lead to negative effects on privacy, equity, cybersecurity, and job security.

Our Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics team serves as a crucial resource for the Congress in understanding both the promise and the risks of emerging innovations. Its growing portfolio of ongoing and future work includes many aspects of AI in defense and civilian applications, quantum computing, regenerative medicine, critical minerals recovery, medical research, and technology transfer to foreign countries. GAO's Innovation Lab continues to apply a hands-on approach to explore data science and emerging technology through experiments, with the goal of enhancing GAO's oversight capabilities.

Since 2019, we issued 45 Science and Tech Spotlights, which distill complex issues into a two-page summary. Last fiscal year, we issued products in areas including generative AI, synthetic biology, and drone swarms. We also issued in-depth Technology Assessments on various topics, including chemical weapons, utility-scale energy storage, fusion energy, and precision agriculture.

- **Cybersecurity.** Escalating threats, including new and more destructive attacks from around the globe, highlight the critical and persistent need for effective cybersecurity. Our work will continue to assess multiple priorities, such as the development and execution of a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, the cybersecurity status of 16 critical infrastructure sectors across the U.S., and the security of federal information systems throughout government.
- **Health Care Costs.** GAO continues to examine the sustainability and integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and overseeing VA, DOD, and Indian Health Service health care services. Health care spending now accounts for around 29 percent of the federal budget and is one of the fastest growing federal expenditures.

GAO's FY 2025 budget request also allows small program and inflationary increases to our Information Technology and Building and Security programs respectively. This includes enhanced cloud data management and storage solutions, as well as IT security upgrades to combat the ever-growing cybersecurity threats toward U.S. assets. The request will also support GAO's Innovation Lab planned work.

GAO is leveraging the Cloud to adopt emerging technology more quickly. Shifting from an on-premises data center to a cloud environment will allow GAO to grow in agility and better engage IT Modernization and cybersecurity strategies. GAO is implementing Zero Trust Architecture

principles to enhance cloud services with access and authentication controls using the cloud-based Secure Access Security Edge. Zero Trust allows GAO to transition from traditional perimeter-focused security models to cloud focused models with security controls throughout the infrastructure.

Our FY 2025 budget also supports space optimization projects to increase leasable space in headquarters and decrease GAO's leased space footprint in the field. For example, we are expanding restricted space for performing classified work in our headquarters building to support our growing volume of classified work. Also, we plan on reducing leased field office space by over 50 percent during the next several years.

The GAO workforce is our most critical asset. It is imperative that GAO provide a safe and secure environment. We need to address a maintenance backlog at our headquarters building. For instance, electrical equipment needs to be replaced. Failure has the potential for both safety issues and a possible loss of power. Also, during FYs 2024 and 2025 we will add Personal Identity Verification cards for all staff and contractors; continue with additional Integrated Electronic Security System upgrades at our field offices; and process Background Investigations to meet the demands for classified audits.

In closing, I appreciate, as always, your careful consideration of our budget and your continued support. I look forward to discussing our FY 2025 budget request with you.

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The Government Accountability Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds; evaluates federal programs and policies; and provides analyses, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make informed oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO's commitment to good government is reflected in its core values of accountability, integrity, and reliability.

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Senator REED. Thank you very much, Comptroller. And now, Director Halpern, please.

THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

STATEMENT OF HON. HUGH N. HALPERN, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer. It is good to see you again. It's good that we got the band back together. I am pleased to appear today to testify in favor of GPO's fiscal year 2025 appropriations request.

As you know, GPO is fundamentally a manufacturing operation. We publish, produce, and maintain materials for all three branches of government. And the way we operate is very much as a private sector business.

Our 1,600 craftspeople and professionals produce virtually all of Congress's documents, along with numerous other publications, and we manufacture secure credential products like the U.S. Passport and law enforcement credentials. We also provide digital information through our trusted digital repository, govinfo.gov, or by serving data to our partners like the Library of Congress, which uses that data on sites like congress.gov.

Only about 10 percent of the agency's operating budget is directly appropriated, and most of that is to cover the cost of Congress's own printing and publishing needs, as well as our public information programs, including the Federal Depository Library Program. We recovered the rest of our \$1.3 billion operating budget directly from our customers.

This year, we are requesting approximately \$136 million, including \$83 million for Congressional publishing, nearly \$42 million for our public information programs, and about \$11.4 million for special projects funded by our revolving fund. This represents about a 3.1 percent increase over last year, and reflects the inflation in labor's labor and materials over the past year.

Fully funding our requests will allow us to continue recruiting the next generation of GPO teammates, and fund our ongoing modernization efforts such as developing XPub, our next generation composition engine, and adopting digital printing technologies. Likewise, it will enable us to expand the depth and breadth of our digital offerings like Congressionally-mandated reports and the Congressional serial set.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer, thank you for your past support of GPO. Supporting this committee and Congress, as a whole, is always one of our top priorities.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee today, and I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to appear before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations to present the Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) fiscal year 2025 appropriations request. I thank you and your staff for your past support of GPO, and I look forward to working closely with you again in the coming year. For fiscal year 2025,

I am requesting appropriations in the amount of \$136,089,000, an increase of \$4,090,000 over our FY 2024 appropriation.

This marks just the fourth time in a decade that GPO has requested an increase in appropriated funds that incorporates increased labor and materials costs while accommodating certain initiatives of importance to Congress and the rest of the legislative branch. Our FY 2025 requests represent a 3.1 percent increase over FY 2024. They are also 7.7 percent lower than the Agency's all-time high appropriation of \$147.5 million in FY 2010.

GPO runs as a business enterprise and appropriated funds represent a comparatively small portion of GPO's overall budget. For FY 2024, about 90 percent of GPO's revenue came from billings of its other Federal customers, including the State Department, the courts, the Department of Defense, and many others. For FY 2025, we estimate that direct appropriations will represent a similar portion of our overall budget. And just as we occasionally need to adjust the rates we charge our other customers, we also need to request adjustments to our appropriation levels to ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligation to recover our costs and provide for investments that will yield additional efficiency and capability.

CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

During fiscal year 2023, GPO made considerable progress in our efforts to chart a new course for the Agency's future. First and foremost, we closed our books for fiscal year 2023 with a net positive income for the third consecutive year. All told, we had a net positive income of \$61.1 million in FY 2023 and did so while making the critical investments in human capital and technology needed to thrive in the years ahead.

One of our proudest achievements in FY 2023 was our work to fulfill the statutory requirements of the "Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act" [Public Law 117-263] to build a centralized repository for the congressionally mandated reports that Federal agencies are required to submit to Congress or committees. Fulfilling this mandate required us to work closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and our congressional stakeholders to make these reports publicly available online within 1 year's time. We are proud to have met our December 2023 deadline and to report that, as of April 24th, there are 315 congressionally mandated reports from 62 issuing agencies posted on GovInfo.

In FY 2023, we also celebrated important milestones for our Security and Intelligent Documents (SID) business unit. First, we marked our first full year of production of the state-of-the-art Next Generation Passports (NextGen), producing an impressive 22 million NextGen passports for the State Department. Additionally, we had the opportunity to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of our Stennis MS Secure Production Facility, which has produced a total of 95 million passports since 2008 and 9.5 million secure credentials since 2013.

We also initiated the Project Common Press with our congressional partners, the first attempt to modernize the look and style of key congressional publications since GPO opened its doors in 1861. Today, advances in technology have provided us a level of flexibility with congressional documents that we haven't had before, whether they are displayed digitally or in print.

For example, GPO uses digital inkjet presses capable of cost-effective printing on any size paper with a wide variety of features, including color. Advances like these, coupled with a congressional willingness to reexamine long-standing practices to improve outcomes for lawmakers, staff, and the public, have led to the bicameral, bipartisan Project Common Press effort to develop a new design template for committee reports and hearings.

With the full support of the Joint Committee on Printing, GPO has started the Project Common Press focus group work of gathering our customer requirements for what a new format might look like. To date, we have completed our first round of focus group meetings with the JCP staff, House and Senate institutional officers, and House and Senate committees. In light of their feedback, we are further refining our designs and look forward to continuing that dialog with congressional stakeholders in the coming year.

Last summer, GPO celebrated the 10 billionth retrieval of government information from our websites, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the signing of the GPO Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act [Public Law 103-40]. It's amazing to think of where our digital presence is today when we consider that it all began with a rudimentary, pre- Netscape Navigator site to post the Congressional Record online in the mid-1990s.

Throughout fiscal year 2023 our ongoing efforts to modernize and build a dynamic and welcoming workplace continued to attract attention. In fact, we were notified

that Forbes Magazine again rated us—now for the third straight year—as one of America’s Best Midsize Employers while also recognizing us as one of the nation’s Best Employers for Veterans for the second consecutive year.

Those positive sentiments were also reflected in the results of our first-ever employee climate survey designed to assess agency morale and identify challenges, which found that 90 percent of respondents are proud of the work they do at GPO and 76 percent agree that respect is high among teammates. While there is always room for improvement, the survey provided encouraging results we hope to build on in the years ahead.

GPO’s vision is of an *America Informed* and our mission is to publish trusted information for the Federal Government to the American people guided by four key values—honesty, kindness, effectiveness, and inclusiveness. Our vision and mission are supported by our FY 2023–2027 Strategic Plan which is built on four strategic goals: to (1) Achieve Operational Excellence; (2) Modernize and Innovate; (3) Ensure Financial Stability; and (4) Develop the Workforce. (A copy of the plan can be found here: https://www.gpo.gov/docs/default-source/mission-vision-and-goals-pdfs/gpo_strategicplan_fy23-27.pdf.)

It is with those goals in mind that we accepted the recommendations of the Task Force on a Digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) last year to guide the evolution of the FDLP and build a strong digital future for all our library partners and transition the program to one that is primarily digital. We are currently moving forward on those Task Force recommendations we can implement on our own. We have also shared a set of legislative proposals with Congress to address other Task Force recommendations and guide ensure our statutes support the transition to a digital FDLP.

As we look to our future, GPO’s single biggest current challenge is attracting and maintaining a workforce prepared to fulfill our mission. Dramatic shifts in the newspaper and publishing industries have significantly diminished traditional sources of potential skilled labor for us. It’s a serious challenge. Fifty percent of our workforce is eligible to retire in the next 4 years. That’s one out of every two proof-readers, presspeople, bookbinders, carpenters, electricians, IT specialists, contracting officers, and a host of other trades and professions working at GPO.

To ensure that GPO continues to attract and retain an exceptional workforce in the years ahead, we have established the Recent Graduates Program and restarted our Apprenticeship Program.

Designed to appeal to talented young graduates seeking a career, the Recent Graduates Program attracted 22 new hires in its first year and another 29 in FY 2023, its second full year of operation. The Apprenticeship Program, created to help promising GPO teammates acquire the skills needed to assume larger roles throughout the Agency, welcomed its first eight participants and aims for 22 more in FY 2024.

We also created a new position, Production Technician, through which the Agency provides promising individuals with 3 years of on-the-job training to earn certification as fully credentialed bookbinders. We have hired 56 Production Technicians in Washington and Stennis, MS to date and are currently working to bring an additional 24 on board in FY 2024.

A SNAPSHOT OF GPO’S BUSINESS

GPO has three primary lines of business: (1) producing items requested by our customers, either ourselves or through contracts with other firms across the country; (2) making government information available through libraries, the Internet, and direct distribution; and (3) building the tools that our customers use to produce their own content in formats that facilitate digital and physical distribution.

PRODUCTION

GPO’s business portfolio consists of—

- our in-house production work for Congress and the Executive Branch.
- the passports and secure credentials we produce for the State Department and other Federal agencies; and
- the print procurement and ancillary business services we provide to a broad range of Federal agencies.

For Congress, in-house work includes the Congressional Record, the House and Senate calendars, bills, resolutions, committee reports and hearings, and the United States Code. For the executive branch, we produce the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations, the President’s Budget, the Economic Report of the President, and many other high-profile publications. Notably, daily production of the

Congressional Record and the Federal Register is like producing two major city newspapers every day.

Additionally, our craftspeople frequently produce a wide array of programs, invitations, and ceremonial and commemorative documents for both the executive and legislative branches.

MAKING GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

Still, another core enterprise of GPO is administering the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), through which GPO provides important public documents to the over 1,100 FDLP-affiliated libraries nationwide, many of which are then also made available to the public at no charge through our ISO-certified secure digital repository, GovInfo.gov. Through the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP), the public can identify and access over 1 million current and historic government titles and resources housed in FDLP libraries throughout the country or linked to in digital collections at libraries and Federal agencies.

GPO's Superintendent of Documents and Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) units support the FDLP libraries in the identification and access to new government content, maintenance of their tangible collections, digitization of aging and rare tangible documents, and education, outreach, and training to ensure that the staff of FDLP libraries can assist their patrons in finding government information in both tangible and digital collections. Additionally, LSCM distributes new tangible publications to the FDLP libraries.

The Superintendent of Documents also supervises a sales and distribution program offering current, high-interest Federal publications to the public. They also provide logistics and warehousing services for Federal customers distributing printed materials.

BUILDING THE TOOLS TO DELIVER ON THE VISION OF AN AMERICA INFORMED

As technology has evolved, GPO has updated its operations to keep pace. With the development of GPO's proprietary MicroComp composition engine in the 1980s, GPO got into the business of building tools that would later be incorporated into our customers' workflows. Soon after adoption by GPO, Congress incorporated MicroComp into its workflows in the House and Senate offices of Legislative Counsel and the legislative operations teams of the Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate. While MicroComp is still in use today, GPO is hard at work on its replacement, XPub, which will leverage several commercial and open-source technologies to produce a composition system worthy of the 21st century.

The current version of XPub is in the user acceptance testing phase with the House and Senate for congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, and public laws. When our customers adopt XPub, hopefully later this year, features will include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills and a new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws.

GPO also works closely with the Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, the Library of Congress, and the Congressional Data Task Force to develop and enhance United States Legislative Markup (USLM), an XML standard in the Legislative Branch and a critical data format for XPub.

GPO's ISO-certified secure digital repository, GovInfo, is also a key technology for supporting our customers. The data in GovInfo supports many public and private sector databases, such as Congress.gov, through open application programming interfaces (APIs). In FY 2023, there were 96 million average monthly information retrievals from GovInfo's collection of more than 2.3 million content packages—as we hit 1 billion annual retrievals for the first time ever.

BREAKING DOWN GPO'S REVENUE

In fiscal year 2023, GPO's overall revenues totaled \$1,229.8 million. Of that amount, \$1,109 million—or about 90 percent—came from direct billings to our non-congressional customers. This category includes the Next Generation passports produced for the State Department and secure credentials produced for numerous Federal agencies, including the Capitol Police, government publications sales and distribution, and Federal print procurement contracts managed by GPO.

Another six percent—or \$69 million—came from billings to Congress for the provision of specific requested services, including the Congressional Record, congressional hearings, bills, resolutions, calendars, and other publications. Still another three percent—or \$36 million—came from appropriations we used to administer the Federal Depository Library Program and provide critical public information program services. And finally, the remaining one percent—or \$16 million—came from appro-

priations this Subcommittee provided to enable GPO to make critical information technology and cybersecurity investments for the future.

SOME KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In fiscal year 2023, our first full year of operations under our ambitious FY 2023—2027 Strategic Plan, GPO continued charting a new course for success in this digital age and achieved some notable successes:

Our GovInfo digital repository earned recertification to retain its status as the world's only ISO 16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository and hit a record of over 1.1 billion information retrievals in a single year—the first time we have ever topped 1 billion retrievals in a year.

Our Customer Services business unit awarded \$496 million in competitive contracts to private-sector printers nationwide supporting thousands of jobs in all 50 states.

Our Security & Intelligent Documents business unit produced a total of 21,889,000 Next Generation Passports for the U.S. Department of State, and another 6,547,000 secure card credentials for our Federal agency customers.

We closed 11 regional print procurement offices transitioning 58 customer service employees to remote work, saving \$1 million per year in rent and other costs.

We removed the antiquated Group 98 web presses that our new inkjet presses have rendered obsolete and initiated a state-of-the-art RTB-480 machine that fully automates the paper roll-to-book form conversions.

We produced the Final Report from the January 6th Committee and the latest report from the House Committee on Modernization with our new XPub composition engine.

Our Creative Services and Digital Media Team won four awards from Graphic Design USA for the high quality of their productions for Federal agency customers.

For the 2d consecutive year, we designed the logo for the United States Capitol Christmas tree, which came from Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia this year.

Our Plant Operations unit was honored by the In-Plant Printing and Mailing Association at their Annual Education Conference with the IPMA's 2023 Innovation and Best of Show Awards for their inkjet press work quality.

We had the privilege of producing the White House Holiday Greeting Card for the fourth consecutive year as well as producing "Holidays at the White House," a White House tour book.

We completed Supplement IV of the Annual Supplements to the United States Code via XPub.

And for the 27th consecutive year, GPO's independent outside auditor provided us with an unmodified, or clean, opinion on our annual financial statements.

GPO'S FY 2025 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST

GPO is requesting an increase in its FY 2025 appropriations to \$136,089,000, a \$4,090,000 increase over our FY 2024 appropriation. This increase will account for changes in our labor and raw materials costs and fund certain ongoing projects of importance to our congressional customers.

This would be GPO's only fourth proposed increase in appropriations since FY 2014 and is 7.7 percent less than our FY 2010 appropriation. Increased productivity through the adoption of new technologies has been key to keeping GPO's appropriations needs down, providing new and improved services at lower costs, and reducing overall headcounts. Currently, we have 1,622 GPO teammates, compared to 2,284 in FY 2010.

One tool we used to keep our appropriations requests low was to repurpose prior-year unexpended balances. We appreciate the willingness of this Subcommittee and the Full Committee to allow GPO to use those balances in support of programs and capital investments that benefit the original purpose of the appropriated funds.

However, as I have informed your predecessors in recent years, those balances are declining, forcing GPO to request additional funds if we are to continue our current pace of development and innovation.

Our FY 2025 request includes \$83,000,000 for congressional publishing, the same amount as our FY 2024 appropriation. It is based on our estimates of Congress' likely needs, informed by historical trends, available unexpended balances, and increased raw materials and labor costs. In constant dollar terms, it represents a 75 percent reduction for congressional publishing appropriations since FY 1980 and a 36 percent reduction since FY 2010.

Our request for our public information programs (PIP) account, through which we administer the nationwide Federal Depository Library Program, is \$41,664,000. This

represents an increase of \$4,296,000—or 11.4 percent—over FY 2024, and will cover the costs of providing Federal Government publications in digital and tangible formats to 1,100 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, and distributing documents to recipients designated by law and international exchanges. Rising labor and compensation costs as well as increased materials costs are the driving factors behind this increase in our FY 2025 PIP appropriation request. With this proposed increase, the PIP appropriation will be just 1.8 percent higher than the amount appropriated in FY 2010, but 29 percent lower in constant-dollar terms.

The final component of our overall appropriations request is for a total of \$11,425,000 for GPO's revolving fund to support capital investments and information technology upgrades, which is \$186,000 less than amounts appropriated in FY 2024.

This component of our request is critically important to ensuring that GPO can make the capital investments in equipment and technology needed to continue providing Congress and our Federal agency customers with the high level of service they expect. This appropriations request will be used to support two specific long-standing priority capital investment projects that will be familiar to the Subcommittee.

First, we are seeking direct appropriations support for our continued development of the XPub composition system, which is intended to replace our more than 40-year-old proprietary MicroComp composition system.

XPub is a transformational project for GPO. It will enable GPO and our customers to move to an all XML-composition workflow, simplifying authoring and production while also providing data in a format where it can easily be posted on the web, delivered to mobile devices, and repurposed into e-books, mobile web applications, or other forms of content delivery which contribute to openness and transparency in Government.

XPub is being deployed on a product-by-product basis. In FY 2019, GPO took a major step forward by publishing the 2018 Main Edition of the United States Code, a nearly 60,000-page publication, through XPub. Since then, GPO continues to work on bringing additional publications into XPub's production process, with a focus on congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, public laws, Statutes at Large, House and Senate calendars, the Congressional Record, and the Federal Register.

In FY 2022, GPO obtained the internal authority to operate for the upcoming production release of congressional bills and public laws. This release is currently being tested by our House and Senate customers and is slated to be in production with the House, Senate, and GPO Bill End during FY 2024. Features in this release include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills and a new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws.

Prior to FY 2022, much of the initial development of XPub had been funded through the annual reprogramming of unexpended appropriations with the Subcommittee's support, but given GPO's mostly static appropriations requests in recent years, those prior-year funds have been largely expended. In recognition of the importance of the XPub project, the Subcommittee generously provided direct appropriations of \$3,370,000 in FY 2022, \$5,630,000 in FY 2023, and \$6,086,000 in FY 2024.

If approved, our \$5,975,000 appropriation request will keep XPub development and deployment on track in FY 2025. Once development is complete, we hope to provide XPub to our customers as a software-as-a-service (SAAS) application, ensuring that there is a dedicated stream of income to support continued development of the platform without the need for separate recurring appropriations.

The second component of GPO's request for increased capital investment appropriations in FY 2025 relates to the continued development of our peerless GovInfo online portal, the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. In recent years, the Subcommittee directly appropriated funds to refresh GovInfo's infrastructure and further develop its content collections. This year's request of \$5,450,000 for GovInfo is \$75,000 more than the Subcommittee provided in FY 2024, and it would be divided between infrastructure investments (\$1,800,000) and development investments (\$3,650,000), including development required to support the digitization of historical content.

Investments in GovInfo support the distribution of much of the legislative data that supports the Library of Congress' Congress.gov site as well as the bulk data made available for other public uses. In addition, GovInfo helps keep the costs of administering the Federal Depository Library Program down by making hundreds of thousands of critical Government publications available online free of charge, obviating the need to print and distribute thousands of volumes annually.

With the Subcommittee's sustained support, GPO has been able to add hundreds of thousands of additional documents and publications to the GovInfo online reposi-

tory each year—over 195,000 content packages were added in FY 2023—and the public’s usage of GovInfo continues to grow, with more than 96 million retrievals per month from GovInfo in FY 2023.

GPO successfully completed its recertification to retain ISO certification as the world’s only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. With this designation, end users can be comfortable knowing that information accessed via GovInfo is both safely secured and authentic, two invaluable attributes for government information.

Lastly, before I conclude, I want to add that, as required by section 1604(c) of the Legislative Branch Inspectors General Independence Act, we have forwarded our Inspector General’s request for \$7,540,000 in budget authority for FY 2025 as part of our FY 2025 Budget Submission. Currently that request is funded as part of GPO’s agency overhead—a component of the prices and rates GPO charges its agency customers and Congress—and not as a separate appropriation.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present GPO’s FY 2025 appropriations request, and for all the support you and your staff have extended to us during these challenging past 2 years. This completes my prepared statement, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator REED. Thank you, Director Halpern.
Director Swagel, please.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

STATEMENT OF HON. DR. PHILLIP SWAGEL, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

Dr. SWAGEL. Thank you, Chairman Reed, and Ranking Member Fischer. Thank you for the opportunity to present this Congressional Budget Office’s budget request.

Let me start by thanking you for providing nearly the full amount we requested for the current fiscal year, and more broadly, for your continued support of the agency. CBO’s requesting an appropriation of \$73.5 million for 2025. That’s an increase of \$3.5 million, or 5 percent from the amount provided in 2024 that would address increased costs from inflation. It would sustain our investments in IT infrastructure, and enable CBO to expand our staff in key areas.

The CBO’s mission is to provide nonpartisan analysis to the Congress that’s timely, rigorous, and transparent. My commitment is to get you the information you need when you need it. When legislation is heading to a vote, we provide cost estimates, real time analysis of amendments, often hundreds or even thousands, for the House NDAA for example.

We do analysis of large complex legislation such as the reauthorization of the Farm Bill that we’re working hard on now. And we produce budget and economic projections, and incorporate the effects of recent legislation and economic developments. We’re working on our update of the 10-year budget right now for June release.

There’s continued strong interest in CBO’s work from the Congressional leadership, from committees, and from members. The additional resources we’re requesting for this year would allow CBO to do even better in terms of our responsiveness and our transparency. The fiscal year 2024 funding we receive will permit us to grow from about 267 people—that was at the end of March—to 276 by the end of this year.

Our request for 2025 would allow us to grow by an additional 9, that’s 285, and I would say that staffing level would allow CBO to fulfill the agency’s requirements under the Congressional Budget

Act. In particular, CBO would add more analysts in areas of particular Congressional focus; defense and homeland security. Right now, we're advertising to hire three more people in those areas. Also, economic implications of fiscal policy, long-term projections, healthcare, including Medicare and Medicaid, and others, and social security.

The requested increase is entirely for personnel expenses, and that's largely to cover the salaries and benefits for current employees, and then to a much lesser extent, to fund the new staff I mentioned.

The non-personnel expenses will decline by about 3 percent, and that's because some of our spending for information technology in 2024 is for projects that we deferred over the last year or so while operating under the continuing resolution. And those expenses will not recur next year.

Let me just focus on the appropriations committees. So, we will support the appropriators with real time provision by provision estimates of the 12 annual appropriations bills, well as any supplemental appropriations bills should they come, and then, any continuing resolutions.

We will respond to thousands of requests for technical assistance, and do cost estimates of amendments. And we're ready to do this for the appropriators this year, you know, again, on the schedule that the appropriators want, and getting you the information when you need it.

In addition, we'll provide hundreds of cost estimates for legislation that's required by statute, provide cost estimates before a floor vote for nearly all bills. We'll publish dozens of reports, both statutory reports and requested reports on a wide variety of topics.

In summary, to achieve our goal of being as responsive as possible and as transparent as possible, CBO requests an increase of \$3.5 million. With your support, we look forward to continuing to provide timely and high-quality analysis to the Congress.

Thank you very much, and I'm happy to answer your questions [The statement follows:]

Congressional Budget Office
Nonpartisan Analysis for the U.S. Congress



TESTIMONY

The Congressional Budget Office's Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025

Phillip L. Swagel
Director

Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

MAY 8 | 2024

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Congressional Budget Office's budget request.¹ CBO requests appropriations of \$73.5 million for fiscal year 2025: About 89 percent would be for pay and benefits; 7 percent would be for information technology (IT); and 4 percent would be for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, and other items. The request amounts to an increase of \$3.5 million, or 5 percent, from the \$70 million that CBO received for 2024 (see Figure 1). That increase would address increased costs brought about by inflation, sustain investments in IT infrastructure, and enable CBO to expand its staff in key areas.

The requested budget is based on strong interest in CBO's work from the Congressional leadership, committees, and Members. On the legislative front this past year, CBO published about 675 cost estimates and devoted significant resources to analyzing the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (Public Law 118-5), the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (P.L. 118-31), and H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act. The agency also fulfilled thousands of requests for technical assistance related to appropriation bills and the reauthorization of the farm bill. Providing estimates and assistance to the 119th Congress as it considers significant legislative initiatives is likely to require additional resources.

Operating under a continuing resolution—that is, at its fiscal year 2023 funding level—for half of fiscal year 2024 has been challenging. CBO postponed filling vacant positions and allowed the agency to shrink from 279 in late 2022 to 267 now. In addition, the agency cut back in myriad ways to save money.

CBO's fiscal year 2024 funding will enable the agency to grow back to 276 positions by the end of the year, and the fiscal year 2025 request would support 285 employees—enough to satisfy its responsibilities under the Congressional Budget Act and enable it to be even more responsive in preparing cost estimates and providing technical assistance to Congressional committees.

Of the nine new staff members in 2025:

- Five would improve CBO's capabilities to produce dynamic analysis (that is, determining how changes in fiscal policies would affect the economy), long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs (like student loan programs);
- Two would enhance CBO's responsiveness in producing cost estimates and providing technical assistance in the legislative process;
- One would enhance CBO's IT security; and
- One would boost outreach to Congressional staff and the press.

CBO plans to use expert consultants more than it has in the past—enabling the agency to shift to the Congress's key areas of focus more easily and to be more nimble in conducting facility management, work in IT, and financial management.

CBO's requested increase is entirely for personnel expenses. In the request, total nonpersonnel expenses decline by about 3 percent because some of the agency's spending for IT in 2024—including purchases of equipment, cybersecurity, and cloud services—is for deferred projects that will not recur in 2025.

CBO's Budget Request and Its Consequences for Staffing and Output

In fiscal year 2025, CBO will continue its mission of providing objective, insightful, clearly presented, and timely budgetary and economic information to the Congress. The \$73.5 million requested would be used mostly for personnel salaries and benefits.

Funding Request for Personnel Costs and Consequences for Staffing

CBO requests \$65.5 million for salaries and benefits to support 285 employees by the end of fiscal year 2025, which equates to 278 full-time-equivalent positions for the year. That amount represents an increase in personnel costs of \$3.7 million, or 6.1 percent, from the \$61.8 million that was provided to CBO in fiscal year 2024.

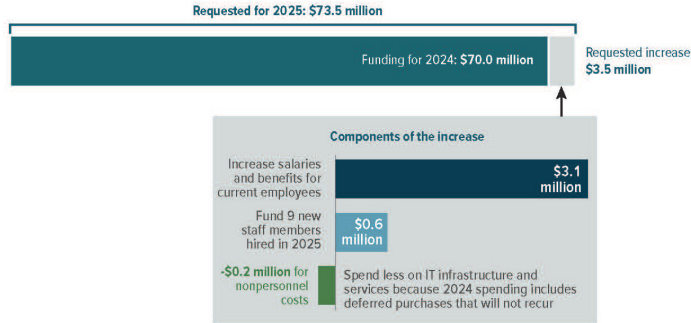
Of the total requested amount:

- \$47.1 million would cover salaries—an increase of \$2.3 million, or 5 percent, from the amount provided in 2024. The requested increase would

1. See Congressional Budget Office, *The Congressional Budget Office's Request for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025* (March 2024), www.cbo.gov/publication/59698.

Figure 1.

Components of Requested \$3.5 Million Increase



Data source: Congressional Budget Office.

fund the hiring of nine new staff members in 2025. It would also provide for inflation adjustments and performance-based salary increases for current staff in 2025. Employees earning less than \$100,000 would receive an across-the-board increase of 4.5 percent, whereas employees earning \$100,000 or more (for whom more of their compensation is based on performance) would receive a 2.5 percent increase.

- \$18.4 million would fund benefits—an increase of \$1.5 million, or 8.8 percent, from the amount provided in 2024. The requested increase would cover growth in the cost of federal benefits and would fund benefits for the nine new staff members.

Funding Request for Nonpersonnel Costs

CBO requests \$8.0 million for costs other than personnel costs. Those funds would cover current IT operations—such as cybersecurity, software and hardware maintenance, software development, communications, and purchases of commercial data and equipment—and would pay for training, expert consultant services, office supplies, travel, interagency agreements, facilities support, editorial support, financial management operations (including auditing of the agency’s financial statements), subscriptions to library services, and other items.

The requested amount for nonpersonnel costs is \$0.2 million, or 2.9 percent, less than the amount in fiscal year 2024. The requested funding would, among other things, cover IT and other operational costs; continue to provide computing capabilities and maintenance for staff workstations that have been migrated to cloud-based systems; and improve CBO’s ability to detect, assess, and recover from cyberattacks. Much of the agency’s spending on cybersecurity is the cost of maintaining access to data that are essential to CBO’s analyses.

Consequences for Output

The requested funding would allow CBO to produce a great deal of valuable analysis for the Congress, including analysis in areas in which the agency anticipates additional legislative activity and oversight (see Table 1). It would also allow CBO to provide more technical assistance to committees and Members when they are crafting legislation and faster turnarounds when demand surges. In addition to providing major analytic products, CBO would be able to continue to produce other important material, such as presentations about CBO’s work, letters in response to Members’ questions, and blog posts.

CBO regularly consults with committees and the Congressional leadership to ensure that the agency’s resources are focused on the work that is of highest

Table 1.

Products by the Congressional Budget Office, Calendar Years 2023 to 2025

Type of Product	2023, actual	2024, estimate	2025, estimate
Fulfilled Requests for Technical Assistance. Such requests typically come from committees and Members of Congress seeking a clear picture of the budgetary effects of proposals before they introduce or formally consider legislation.	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
Cost Estimates for Authorizing Bills. CBO is required by law to produce a cost estimate for nearly every bill that is approved by a full committee of either the House or the Senate. The agency also publishes cost estimates at other stages of the legislative process if requested to do so by a relevant committee or by the Congressional leadership. In addition, CBO reviews bills scheduled to be considered under suspension of the rules in the House.	675	900	900
Cost Estimates for Appropriation Bills. Those tabulations include account-level estimates for individual appropriation acts at all stages of the legislative process, as well as summary tables showing the status of discretionary appropriations (by appropriations subcommittee) and running totals on a year-to-date basis.	100	100	100
Reports, Working Papers, Testimonies, Slide Decks, Interactive Tools, and Infographics. CBO's publications are generally required by law, prepared in response to requests from the Chairs and Ranking Members of key committees, or aimed at enhancing the transparency of the agency's work. They examine the outlook for the budget and the economy, major issues affecting that outlook under current law, the budgetary effects of policy proposals that could change that outlook, the details of the federal budget process, and a broad range of related budgetary and economic topics in such areas as health care, defense policy, Social Security, and climate change.	102	100	100

Data source: Congressional Budget Office.

priority to the Congress. Nevertheless, the demands on the agency remain intense and strain its resources in many areas. Even with high productivity by a dedicated staff, CBO expects that it will not be able to produce as many estimates and other analyses as committees, leadership, and individual Members request.

Requested Information and Authorities

In this section, CBO provides information about its challenges in accessing federal data and requests the authority to provide a childcare benefit.

CBO's Access to Data

The House Committee on Appropriations directed CBO to report to the committees of jurisdiction on any challenges in accessing federal data and to identify whether the Congress can take any actions to ensure continuous and real-time access. CBO obtains from federal agencies a wide array of information, which it uses to produce baseline budget projections, economic projections, cost estimates, and reports.

CBO works collaboratively with agencies to obtain data through formal and informal means. The Budget Act

provides CBO general authority to access data from a variety of sources. CBO also accesses data by using specific authority or by collaborating with other agencies. CBO currently has more than 20 active data-use agreements with other federal agencies. However, shifting legal and regulatory frameworks of federal agencies can delay, weaken, or cut off CBO's access to information. The time spent negotiating and renewing agreements varies widely and is unpredictable, taking from a couple of weeks to over a year.

During 2024, CBO identified three challenges and actions the Congress can take to improve the agency's access to federal data:

- **Preserving access to student aid data.** Without a change to section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, CBO will lose access to an important component of the agency's models of the Federal Pell Grant Program and student loan programs. CBO currently receives from the Department of Education data on the income of student loan and Pell grant recipients. In the summer of 2024, the Education Department will begin receiving certain income information about student loan borrowers directly

from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), newly making the data federal tax information (FTI). CBO is seeking an amendment to section 6103 to allow the agency to continue to receive those data. CBO receives FTI for other purposes and is compliant with the IRS's security requirements. CBO has been working with the House Committee on Ways and Means; the House Committee on Education and the Workforce; the Senate Committee on Finance; the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; and the House and Senate Budget Committees regarding an amendment.

- **Strengthening general authority under the Budget Act.** CBO seeks to clarify and strengthen its general authority for accessing executive branch data under the Budget Act. The agency seeks an amendment to section 201(d) of the act to strike the parenthetical "(other than material the disclosure of which would be a violation of law)." That caveat risks undermining the broad data access that the Budget Act is intended to provide and is unnecessary when another statute more specifically governs CBO's access to specific data. The caveat can also delay CBO's access to data by requiring additional discussions with agencies, impairing the timeliness of CBO's work. In February 2024, the House Budget Committee approved H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act. Enacting the bill would remove the caveat and, instead, provide CBO access to executive branch data unless that access is specifically disallowed by a future law. The bill also includes a reference to section 203(e) to highlight CBO's obligation to protect the restricted information it receives.
- **Obtaining authority under the Privacy Act.** CBO also seeks to clarify and strengthen its authority for accessing executive branch data through an amendment to the Privacy Act of 1974. In June 2023, the Senate passed S. 1549, and in February 2024, the House Committee on Oversight approved an identical bill, H.R. 7184, which would authorize the disclosure to CBO of information protected by the Privacy Act, providing the agency the same access that the Government Accountability Office has. In general, the Privacy Act prohibits executive branch agencies from disclosing certain records without the prior written consent of the people to whom the records pertain. There are currently 12 exceptions to that prohibition, and enacting S. 1549 or H.R. 7184 would add a 13th specifically for disclosures to CBO.

The agency often requires the type of individually identifiable data the Privacy Act protects to prepare requested analyses and avoid relying on aggregations and statistics created by executive branch agencies. If granted access to such data, CBO would protect the information and not disclose it.

In addition to the items above, CBO is seeking authority for fiscal year 2025 (and would need to renew its request for any subsequent years) to accept gifts of property, including money and intangible property, or services to support the operation of the agency. Under current law, CBO often can obtain new data sets and tools from private entities by procuring them using appropriated funds or negotiating no-cost contracts. Gift authority would enable CBO to sometimes obtain such data and tools more quickly or without expense, as many legislative and executive agencies do. This authority would also enable CBO to accept donations for events such as those commemorating the agency's 50th anniversary.

As the interests of the Congress change, CBO must develop the capacity to analyze new issues and policies. Consequently, the agency will need to obtain new sources of information and might require new specific authorities to do so. CBO will work with the committees of jurisdiction as new challenges arise.

Requested Authority for a Childcare Benefit

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, noted that each legislative branch agency may request authority to provide a childcare benefit in its fiscal year 2025 budget request. CBO requests the authority as follows:

Sec. ____ The Director of the Congressional Budget Office may expend funds appropriated in fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter to reimburse employees of the Office for costs to improve the affordability of childcare if the Director determines that reimbursing such expenses is of sufficient benefit or value to the Office.

Included in CBO's fiscal year 2025 budget request is \$250,000 for the cost of those payments (embedded in various object classes for benefits). This benefit would enhance CBO's ability to recruit and retain a talented and competitive workforce. Because of the agency's size, individual reimbursement for childcare costs is the most cost-effective, feasible mechanism for providing a

childcare benefit to its employees, making the cost more affordable.

Strengthening Responsiveness

CBO seeks to provide information when it is most useful to the Congress. Depending on its purpose, that information takes a variety of forms, such as cost estimates, background information, and technical assistance. In almost all cases, CBO completes a cost estimate before legislation comes to a floor vote. In addition, the agency works to provide technical assistance, reports, and other information to lawmakers and their staff during earlier stages of the legislative process.

Beginning in fiscal year 2019, CBO initiated a multiyear effort to strengthen its responsiveness to the Congress. To carry out that plan, CBO received additional resources to expand staffing in high-demand areas, such as health care and immigration. It has increased its use of assistant analysts, who can move from one topic to another to support more senior analysts when demand surges for analysis of a particular topic or when additional assistance is needed for a complicated estimate. In addition, CBO continues to engage expert consultants in complex areas, such as health policy, agricultural and nutrition programs, economic forecasting, and climate-related research. Finally, the agency is continuing to expand its use of team approaches for large and complicated projects. That approach has been particularly effective in enabling CBO to produce timely analyses of legislation involving health care.

CBO's goal is to increase the number of staff with overlapping skills within and across teams. In some cases, those skills will consist of expertise related to particular topics, such as defense or transportation. In other cases, they will be more technical, such as the ability to design and improve simulation models. In a similar vein, CBO plans to invest additional resources in bolstering analysts' ability to coordinate work that requires expertise from across the agency. Another objective is to give additional senior analysts responsibility for projects that span multiple subject areas.

The budgetary increase that CBO is requesting would allow it to increase its efforts to be responsive. In 2025, CBO plans to hire additional staff to produce more timely cost estimates and fulfill more Congressional requests for technical assistance, particularly in the areas (like health care) that involve complicated modeling,

and staff to conduct more work in the areas of dynamic analysis, long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs (like student loan programs)—areas in which CBO expects the Congress to have increased interest.

Enhancing Transparency

CBO works hard to make its analysis transparent and plans to strengthen those efforts, building on the increased emphasis that it has placed on the endeavor over the past several years. In 2024 and 2025, many of CBO's employees will spend part of their time on making the agency's analyses more transparent.

Testifying and Publishing Answers to Questions

In 2024 and 2025, CBO expects to testify about its baseline projections and other topics in response to requests by the Congress. That work will involve presenting oral remarks, answering questions at hearings, and presenting written statements, as well as publishing answers to Members' questions for the record. CBO will continue to address issues raised as part of the oversight provided by the House and Senate Budget Committees and the Congress generally.

Explaining Analytical Methods

CBO plans to publish material providing general information to help Members of Congress, their staff, and others better understand its work. For example, a report will explain the agency's approach to modeling the effects of various policies in the electric power sector. Working papers, too, will provide such explanations for various topics, and in some cases, CBO will be able to publish the computer code used in models.

Releasing Data

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will maintain its practice of publishing extensive sets of data to accompany its major recurring reports, including detailed information about 10-year budget projections, historical budget outcomes, 10-year projections for federal trust funds, revenue projections by category, spending projections by budget account, tax parameters, effective marginal tax rates on labor and capital, and 10-year projections of economic variables, including the economy's potential (or sustainable) output.

The agency will also provide details about its baseline projections, for example, for the Federal Pell Grant Program, student loan programs, Medicare, military

retirement, the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, Social Security Disability Insurance, Social Security Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, the Social Security trust funds, child nutrition programs, the Child Support Enforcement and Child Support Collections programs, foster care and adoption assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, unemployment compensation, the Department of Agriculture's mandatory farm programs, federal programs that guarantee mortgages, programs funded by the Highway Trust Fund, benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and veterans' disability compensation and pensions.

Other data will provide details about long-term budget projections, projections underlying Social Security estimates, more than a thousand expired or expiring authorizations of appropriations, and dozens of federal credit programs. When CBO analyzes the President's budget request, it will post a set of files providing estimates of the budgetary effects of specific proposals. The agency will also continue to post the data underlying various reports' charts and tables.

Analyzing the Accuracy of CBO's Estimates

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will continue to release reports analyzing the accuracy of its past projections of outlays, revenues, deficits, and debt. And the agency will compare its projections of federal subsidies for health insurance with actual amounts.

Comparing Current Estimates With Previous Ones

In several of its recurring publications—reports about the budget and economic outlook, federal subsidies for health insurance, and the long-term budget outlook—CBO will continue to explain the differences between the current year's projections and those produced in the previous year. In its cost estimates, CBO will continue to identify related legislative provisions for which it has provided recent estimates and explain the extent to which the provisions and estimates at hand are similar or different.

Comparing CBO's Estimates With Those of Other Organizations

CBO will compare its budget projections with the Administration's and its economic projections with those of private forecasters and other government agencies when possible. In addition, in various reports, the agency

will include comparisons of its estimates with estimates made by other organizations. When time does not allow for publication but interest is great, analysts will discuss such comparisons with Congressional staff.

Estimating the Effects of Policy Alternatives

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will update some of its interactive tools and release new ones to help the Congress and the public better understand the effects of potential changes to federal policies. Reports will also illustrate the potential effects of various policy proposals.

Characterizing the Uncertainty of Estimates

CBO will update an interactive workbook showing its estimates of how changes in economic conditions affect the federal budget. The agency's reports about the 10-year outlook for the budget and the economy, the long-term outlook for the budget, and federal subsidies for health insurance will contain substantial discussions of the uncertainty of CBO's projections. In addition, in most cost estimates in which uncertainty is significant, CBO will include a discussion of the topic.

Creating Data Visualizations

In 2024 and 2025, CBO will provide information about its budget and economic projections in slide decks and create infographics about actual outlays and revenues. The agency will also produce more reports that rely principally on visual presentations. And it will look for opportunities to include graphics to enhance the explanations in some cost estimates.

Conducting Outreach

CBO will continue to communicate regularly with Congressional staff and others outside the agency to explain its findings and methods, respond to questions, and obtain feedback. The agency's Director will meet frequently with Members of Congress to do the same. After each set of baseline projections is published, CBO's staff will meet with Congressional staff to discuss the projections and answer questions.

CBO will obtain input from its Panel of Economic Advisers, its Panel of Health Advisers, and other experts. Many reports will benefit from outside experts' written comments on preliminary versions. For some recurring reports produced on compressed timetables, such as the one about CBO's long-term budget projections, the agency will solicit comments on previous publications

and selected technical issues to incorporate improvements in future editions.

CBO's staff will give presentations on Capitol Hill—some in collaboration with Congressional committees and the Congressional Research Service—on CBO's budget and economic projections and on other topics. Those presentations will allow CBO to explain its work and answer questions. The agency will also give presentations about its findings and about work in progress in a variety of venues to offer explanations and gather feedback. In addition, CBO will use blog posts to summarize and highlight various issues.

Finally, to keep the Congress informed of its work, CBO will continue its practice of sending an email to interested staff notifying them about recently released reports and cost estimates. The agency will also continue publishing a recently initiated quarterly newsletter, *CBO's Quarter in Review*, which is a roundup of the agency's most recent publications and cost estimates. The newsletter is a companion to quarterly reports listing recent publications and work in progress, which may include reports, working papers, testimonies, interactive tools, infographics, and cost estimates.

This testimony summarizes information in the Congressional Budget Office's budget request for fiscal year 2025. That budget request was prepared by Leigh Angres, Tracy L. Henry, and Kamna Virmani with assistance from Angela D. Clark, Dana Ealey, Ann E. Futrell, and Kevin Laden and with guidance from Mark Smith. It is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/59698.

Mark Hadley reviewed the testimony. John Skeen edited it, and Jorge Salazar created the graphics and prepared the text for publication. The testimony is available at www.cbo.gov/publication/60218.

CBO seeks feedback to make its work as useful as possible. Please send comments to communications@cbo.gov.



Phillip L. Swagel
Director



Senator REED. Thank you very much, Doctor.

My first question for each of you, and if you could respond as briefly as you think possible, because we'll follow up and ask you for some written comments too.

Senator REED. If the Legislative Branch fiscal year 2025 allocation requires your agency's budget to remain at the fiscal year 2024 level, what are the impacts your agency's ability to achieve its mission? And begin with, Doctor, so I go on then down the line.

Dr. SWAGEL. Thank you. Looking ahead, we will be prudent in our expansion. We're advertising for people. We'll hire people, but I will make sure that we don't hire more than we can support at CR level. You know, we will hire in the key areas; healthcare, and national security, defense, and veterans, the key things that we're advertising for now. So that will help improve our responsiveness.

The additional people I would hope to hire with our fiscal year 2025 request would let us do even more. So operating at the CR, I think, we will do better than we did last year. But there will still be areas where, you know, I would say we'll have gaps, and it will affect our responsiveness.

Senator REED. Very good.

IMPACT TO GAO OF A FLATLINE FISCAL YEAR 2025 ALLOCATION

Comptroller General.

Mr. DODARO. Since 80 percent of our costs are salaries and benefits, operating at a CR level means a smaller GAO with less services to the Congress in meeting congressional demands and priorities. This would be especially true in areas Congress has specifically asked us to increase our capabilities.

A flat budget would erode our capabilities in the science and technology area at a time when artificial intelligence is exploding. It would undermine our abilities in the national defense area to have the full coverage of all the mandates in the NDAA. As I mentioned, there's 115 mandates, and we receive a lot of requests from Committee Chairs and Ranking Members.

In addition to those mandates from the Congress, a flat fiscal year 2025 budget allocation would impede our ability to deal with fraud prevention in the Federal Government. I'm very concerned that Federal Government is not anywhere near adequately prepared. Fraud has become more sophisticated with organized crime involved both domestically and internationally. A flat budget would also undermine our ability to deal with the cybersecurity issues. And particularly, in critical infrastructure protections we are vulnerable but I think we're vulnerable in weapon systems and our space programs. These are all critical, important areas.

Since our costs are mostly people, less resources means we can hire less people. Less staffing means less support for the Congress.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Director Halpern, please.

Mr. HALPERN. Mr. Chairman, the short answer is whatever level you're going to give us, we'll manage because that's what we have to do. What we would ask is that if there are cuts necessary, that we have a discussion about which accounts they come out of.

So, the Appropriations Committee funds three accounts. Congressional printing, which we estimate the amount that Congress will

need each year. So, there's probably some play in that account. Similarly, the amounts that come out of our revolving fund are for special projects. And while those are important projects to the agency, if we have to defer them and slow our rollout of some of those projects, we can do that.

Where we have a much tighter budget is in our public information programs, because that is a directly appropriated program. And we've asked for what we need, and should that account be cut, it would likely mean we would either be unable to backfill some of our librarian and other public information specialist roles or that we wouldn't be able to meet the demand that we have on that front.

So if, overall, you would need to trim our overall request, our request to you is that we have a discussion about where that comes from ahead of time so that we can best manage the impact on the agency.

Senator REED. Could you give us an example of your public information role? One of the programs you're—

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. The best recent example is Congress's mandate to make Congressionally-mandated reports available. So, there are lots of exceptions to what goes online, but traditionally, these were reports that were received by committees. They went into a filing cabinet and then they went into an archive box.

Now, there's a process where we are working with the agencies as they deliver those reports to you to get them online to-date. We have, I think, as of yesterday, about 331 Congressionally-mandated reports over this Congress, and the prior Congress, and from about 60-some-odd agencies. We're trying to expand that and build that. If we don't have the personnel to work on that, that mandate, that new mandate, that's going to slow down our ability to comply with Congress's mandate on that front.

Senator REED. Thank you.

Comptroller to Dorado, you mentioned the mandates which you received from Congress. Many of them emanated from the Armed Services Committee. So, I will have a discussion with my colleagues there. I'm being somewhat facetious.

What is the impact of these mandates? I mean, does it prevent you from doing more valuable things, or is—you know, just give me a sense because I—

Mr. DODARO. I think the mandates are good. They're good work. We have a dialogue with congressional staffers throughout the process. Congress is focused on the big investments that they have been making in areas such as defense, and the Department of Energy, particularly on a nuclear weapons modernization. So, I think the mandates are good.

We've worked with the committee on the new FAA Reauthorization Bill where there are over 30 mandates for GAO. In the Infrastructure Bill we are still working through 34 mandates for GAO. So, it's not just Armed Services. Just over half our work now is a result of mandates, but I think they're fine because we reach out early on when the bills are introduced.

Since we have an ongoing dialogue with staff, the mandates for GAO work are shaped appropriately. Our fiscal year 2025 request, would keep us at our current staffing level. However, the cost of

personnel has gone up, including, cost-of-living increases, healthcare benefits, et cetera. We can meet all the priorities of the Congress, but if we're operating at the same funding level from fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2025, it's probably in the order of 300 or 400 less people in GAO.

That would mean that if there's emerging issues that come up where there's another, global crisis for example or there's a domestic crisis it would be difficult for us to provide real time oversight. For example, experts are expecting a big hurricane season this year of more intense hurricane season. GAO is always involved in reporting on national disasters. If we are under a flatline budget we will not have flexibility to take on other emerging domestic or international issues that may come up.

I feel like we've got a good relationship with the committees across the Congress to set priorities. If we have the resources, we'll meet them. If not, we're going to have to reprioritize and make tough decisions across all the committees.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Senator Fischer, please.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Chairman Reed.

Mr. Dodaro, you were talking about the fraud prevention work that you do. And you mentioned hiring new staff, and having the resources for staff available to you to do that. But along with hiring new staff for those audits and the investigative service team, what efforts is GAO taking to better find and eliminate fraud at the Federal level? The number that you gave, from 2018 to 2022, is staggering.

Mr. DODARO. Yes. One thing is to convince people of the scope of the problem. In the unemployment insurance program alone, we estimated between \$100 billion and \$135 billion of fraud during the pandemic. The Inspector General from SBA estimated about \$200 billion in fraud in the PPP Program and the EIDL Program.

I have a number of legislative proposals that I've given to the Congress. We worked with the Congress in 2015 to put a fraud prevention framework in place. Since 2016, agencies are supposed to have dedicated resources and conduct risk assessments, but they haven't done them. We need to do more in depth work. For example—

Senator FISCHER. How many haven't done them?

Mr. DODARO. Most of the 40 programs that we have examined, including several key agencies. We have 173 recommendations to address these gaps. But just to give you one example, SBA, the first fraud risk assessment they did was in February 2022, after all the money had been allocated. Right now there isn't enough effort to prevent fraud. That is the only effective way to make progress.

You're going to catch some of these people. But most money lost to fraud will not be recovered. At best, you'll get 10 percent back. The Department of Labor Inspector General overseeing the Unemployment Insurance system is trying to extend the statute of limitations for prosecuting fraud to 10 years rather than 5. I support that.

I'm trying to convince Congress to keep an analytic center within the pandemic response accountability community made up of the Inspectors General. It's very effective, but it's going to go out of

business soon. I think it ought to be made permanent. I made a similar suggestion after the Recovery Act back in 2009.

That operation was very effective in preventing fraud. It was supposed to be picked up by Treasury but that never happened. I recommended Congress make it permanent; but the Congress never acted. Then during the pandemic with trillions of dollars pouring out an analytic center needed to be reestablished, but it was too late to prevent the fraud that occurred.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Dr. Swagel, you talked about the cost estimates for nearly every bill that passes through the House or the Senate, or in the committee when it comes out of committee, and the workload that you have there. For calendar years, 2024 and 2025, CBO cost estimates that you're going to be conducting, cost estimates for 900 authorizing bills each year. That's a 34 percent increase compared to 2023.

How are you going to be able to absorb that increase in workload for cost estimates of authorizing bills? Can you tell us something about the efficiencies that your agency can deploy to improve the work product, the output, without sacrificing the detail that you are able to include in that?

Dr. SWAGEL. So, my key goal is to have nearly every bill have a cost estimate published before it goes to the floor. You know, as soon as it comes out of a committee, but before it goes to the floor of either chamber. We hit that 97 percent of the time.

One of the key things we've done is to have more flexible staff that we're hiring, since it's more generalists, where they tend to be younger staff, and we cross train them across different areas. So instead of someone who's only looking at, like, you know, unemployment insurance, like Gene just talked about, they'll be able to work on a portfolio of activities. And so, for example, on the Farm Bill, which has just been an all hands on deck exercise, you can imagine—

Senator FISCHER. You're mentioning every committee that I'm on. So, I'm trying hard not to take this personally.

Dr. SWAGEL. I wish I was—

Senator FISCHER. It was Appropriations, with Armed Services now, and now the Farm Bill, I think you mentioned FAA, too?

[Laughter.]

Dr. SWAGEL. So, you know, on the Farm Bill, that's just across the agency, and we're drawing in people. So, that's really been the key for us is, you know, maintaining the expertise, but being more flexible and hiring people in a way that's more flexible. So that's really a key initiative.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Mr. Dodaro, you're in the midst right now of a 5-year multi-phase effort to modernize the agency's internal information technologies. So, the IT infrastructure that you have there.

In fiscal year 2025, you're requesting, I think, \$3.75 million to build upon and continue that modernization effort. Hopefully, that's going to give us more predictable operating costs going forward. But given the nature of GAO's work, the agency, you have to have, first of all, effective, but also secure IT systems.

Can you give us an update on the status of that IT modernization effort, and specifically what projects the agency is undertaking to improve that infrastructure, please?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. We're moving to a cloud-based infrastructure. That will give us more flexibility and predictability in operating costs. We've moved many applications there already such as our email systems and our Internet website. But we still need to modernize our document management system and move it to the cloud.

The document management system houses all the information we collect during an audit, and it includes a lot of sensitive information that has to be protected. The system needs to be moved to the cloud. The technology we are using now is over 30 years old. That's one of the main things we need to do during this next year.

We also are going to be moving to get all our reports published in the HTML format so they're more easily searchable and accessible on any device. Those are the two main projects that we're trying to complete during this period of time. This will better serve our people, and make us more efficient sharing the documentation. We will also be better able to protect sensitive information with cloud-based security.

Senator FISCHER. What reports are most searched for? What agency gets the most hits?

Mr. DODARO. I'd have to check the records for more detail, but it'd be a safe bet to say Defense is one of the top areas of demand for GAO reports. We do a lot of work in that area. Healthcare is also a highly searched subject. GAO does a lot of work in that area too. There is demand for almost everything GAO produces.

GAO is a very well cited organization. I get a report every morning of all the broadcast media, the print media, blogs, and tweets where GAO's work is cited to make sure it's accurate. If it's not accurate, I try to get it corrected as soon as possible. Every day there's probably about 50 or so different things in there.

And we push our reports out to different media groups. People who cover healthcare, defense, or other key areas sign up to regularly receive GAO reports. They automatically get every report on that issue. Last year, GAO published about 670 reports, and of course, we send our expert witnesses to testify before committees as well.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Mr. DODARO. Sure.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator Fischer.

Dr. Swagel, you're an essential part of the legislative process. We can't move legislation without a score from CBO. And you have a reputation for objectivity, thoroughness, and transparency in your work. My assumption would be that if there is budgetary pressure, something's going to give, and that probably would be the thoroughness or the accuracy of your work. So what's your, sort of, take on that?

Dr. SWAGEL. I mean, you know, as I said, my goal is what you need when you need it. And that's often a key balancing, is how thorough against the time that we have.

And, you know, if we didn't have the resources, didn't have the people, those tradeoffs would be harder. You know, so I won't sac-

rifice the integrity and the quality, but it's just the comprehensive-ness is where the tradeoff would come.

Senator REED. Well, that'll impact our ability to function properly and thoroughly. And in every field, we see situations where our initial concept of the cost of a particular program is much less than what it turns out to be, and you've gotten into, as well as the Comptrollers guidance helped us immensely.

Mr. Halpern, you are working on your new system, the XPub system. What's the status?

Mr. HALPERN. So, the status is that we are—it's actually farther along than it ever has been. Just to give you a sense of what XPub will do and where it fits in the system; for roughly four decades GPO has produced the software that allows Congress to print. So, when you hit Control P, it's our software that takes over.

The current software called MicroComp was originally created when I was 12, and to say it's long in the tooth is an understatement. XPub is that that program's replacement. The good news is that XPub for bills, resolutions, and amendments, is at the stage where it's ready for testing. And we believe the House and Senate will begin that user acceptance testing very shortly. We are very optimistic for how that testing will go and its ability to function well in the Senate's IT environment.

Once that is complete, then it will be up to the House and the Senate for when they decide to roll this out to replace MicroComp for bills, resolutions, and amendments. Once that happens, we think you'll see some improvements because XPub composes at least as fast, if not faster, than MicroComp, and the public will see benefits because our current terrible text-only display, and there's no other way to put it, will go away. And a new modern HTML-based display will take its place for new measures produced with XPub.

Once that's complete, we'll start moving to reports, and hearings, and the Federal register, and the Congressional record. But this Bill's resolutions and amendments is our first major milestone, and we are on track to meet that.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Comptroller General, we've all, and you've all talked about the accelerating changes in technology, particularly AI. But we also have in the world of medicine, mRNA, which was the platform to produce the Covid vaccine. It seems every day something new is being discovered, et cetera.

And how does your budget try to anticipate not just what we know now, but within weeks, for days, a month, we'll discover?

Mr. DODARO. Yes. We do strategic planning to look on a longer time horizon. We have a strategic foresight center with some futurists and experts. We've got a special panel on science, technology, and engineering that has all the presidents from national academies serving on it along with people from academia and the private sector. We do a lot of thinking ahead.

Right now, we're working on brain computer interfaces, which has medical application for people with paralysis. These can be either implantable or worn as a type of a headgear. And in defense, we're talking about developing technologies to be able to direct drones through waves processes.

GAO has done a lot of work in regenerative medicine. There's a lot of legal and ethical issues in that subject. We're also doing a lot of work on modeling for infectious diseases. Quantum computing is another area producing change. It will completely change encryption. We try to think ahead and anticipate emerging changes in technology, AI, medicine, defense and other areas.

For example, we publish two-page reports called Spotlights on emerging technologies. Years ago we did one on deep fakes. We started reporting on artificial intelligence back in 2018. We did 50 reports on artificial intelligence before it exploded on the national scene and captivated everybody's attention.

We have a lot of advisors. I pay attention to the defense and intelligence community assessments that are made. I think we have a good cadre of people in that area and that work should continue.

Senator REED. And your analysis extends into classified material as well as unclassified?

Mr. DODARO. Oh, absolutely.

Senator REED. Let me ask Dr. Swagel on any comments you have in this whole area of the new technology.

Dr. SWAGEL. You know, we face the same challenge trying to be ready for legislation in such as—I want to get there with our analysis before you do. You know, is that we're ready to support you on things like AI, whether it's the legislation or the effects of AI on the economy. It's something that we're looking at very carefully.

It's a little early to say what the effect is on the overall economy, but we're following the literature. We're using it a little bit within CBO. We're converting one of our models from an old programming language to a newer one, from Fortran to Python. And there's AI tools that basically help with the translation. They don't do it for us, but they help.

Senator REED. Now, Fortran, that's a name that's from the backside.

Dr. SWAGEL. Yes. I learned Fortran in high school.

Senator REED. Well, I learned basic at West Point, so I'm a behind you or head of you depending on the—

Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Halpern, GPO is working with the executive branch, particularly OMB, to implement the access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act. And this law charged GPO with collecting and making publicly available congressionally-mandated reports from Federal agencies in one central online portal.

Since our last hearing, I know that you've done significant work to implement that law. Is the executive branch proving to be a constructive partner in meeting the requirements of the law?

Mr. HALPERN. I think, in general, the answer is yes. There are always going to be pockets of different agencies where complying with the requirements of the law may not be their highest priority at the moment. We are doing a lot of outreach to a variety of different agencies, and we are getting more and more agencies that are participating regularly.

A good example is we're actually getting some assistance from the public as well. A good friend of mine who writes a transportation newsletter emailed me about 3 or 4 months ago and said,

“Why isn’t DOT submitting Congressionally-mandated reports?” And I said, “Well, I don’t know. You should ask them.” He did, and suddenly, DOT started making sure that we were getting those documents.

So we’re working through a variety of different channels to make sure agencies understand their requirements under the law, and we’re trying to make this as easy for them as possible. So, we’ve been doing this for about a year. We have over 330 reports as of yesterday, and we are hoping that that grows exponentially in the year to come.

Senator FISCHER. To me, it wouldn’t make a lot of sense if you would have to double-check every agency, you know, if you would have to go through what reports were required of that agency, and then check up on them. You can’t depend on your friend with the DOT reports all the time. So how do you address that? Just to send reminders out?

Mr. HALPERN. We send reminders. We work with our colleagues at OMB. OMB Director, Young, is an old friend, and has been very supportive of our efforts here. And we think as agencies get acclimated to this particular requirement, it’s going to be easier for them to comply.

Eventually, we would like to, frankly, be in the business of helping them comply with these kinds of rules by building systems that will enable us to easily get this data from them, both in a nice-looking PDF that looks great in print, but also in structured data that we can then make available through Gov.Info for those folks who want that information that way.

Senator FISCHER. I know that GPO is also working with the National Archives and Records Administration on the Center for Legislative Archives Project, which will provide space for Congress’s important records for the next 50 years. While phase 1 of the project is complete, phase 2 has not moved past the design stage. Can you give us an update on the Archives Project especially the current status of phase 2, please?

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. So, as you mentioned, phase 1 is up and operational and will give Congress probably decades of storage space. The goal is to get phase two, which will complete that 50-year storage requirement.

Congress appropriated dollars for this project before the pandemic, and for a whole lot of reasons, the project didn’t get launched before the pandemic hit. And we have been working, basically, since we came back from the pandemic to get that operational.

We know that that project will now cost more than Congress previously appropriated for that. We are working very closely with the archives, and Dr. Shogan has been a great partner here in trying to get this project off the ground.

Right now, we are working with the staff at the National Archives to establish a memorandum of agreement so that we can move forward in two parts for phase 2. First part, we are going to use the dollars that have already been appropriated to get as far as we possibly can, and we think that will be most of the build out of the space.

The second part of phase 2 will be things like shelving and some of the environmental controls, and we'll have to work with the Archives and Congress to get the funding that we need to finish building that out.

We think we're very close. As I'm sure you can understand, there is sometimes some bureaucratic inertia that we have to overcome to get this done, but our primary mission is to support Congress. And this is just another aspect of that, and we will get this done.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

One last question, please, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Please, go ahead.

Senator FISCHER. Dr. Swagel, CBO's budget request highlights the agency's efforts to enhance transparency of its analysis and projections. In particular, the request notes that CBO will work to explain analytical methods and release data used in major reports.

How do you plan to continue recent efforts to promote that transparency and CBO's work products, and how will the fiscal year 2025 requests build on those existing efforts?

Dr. SWAGEL. No, thank you. It's a key priority for the agency, and we've been working on it, and we'll continue to work on it in a variety of ways. So some of it will be publishing reports, looking at our models and explaining them, and then interacting with outside groups.

As an example, our work on drug price negotiation, we published an initial report and then did some presentations. Industry groups came to us and they basically said you're missing things on, you know, how drugs are—drug development is financed.

We said, you're right. We changed the methodology. We went back to them. You know, they're not going to say, oh, yes, it's fine, but we're trying to be responsive. So that's one group.

Another group of efforts is posting data and then posting parts of our models, essentially code snippets. And we're trying to do the data in a way that's as flexible as possible so outside groups can, you know, manipulate it in a good way and tell the story that they want to tell.

I'll just give you one example, then I'll stop. We have an annual series on income distribution that is started by Senator Baucus, and now continued by Senator Wyden. He has directed us to do this. And we publish the data that goes into that in a spreadsheet, and then others will use it, and have given us feedback. And we've taken that on board and since, we publish more data because of that feedback.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Well, thank you, Senator Fischer.

Gentlemen, thank you for your excellent testimony. As we understand, we'll take all your advice into consideration. And we have a challenging budget ahead of us, both Senator Fischer and I, but your service is essential to our operation and to the operation of the government. You do it well, and once again, would you please thank all of the men and women who make it happen?

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the agencies for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. GENE DODARO, COMPTROLLER GENERAL DODARO,
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

Question. The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 resulted in strict levels for appropriations in Fiscal Year 2024 and has similarly strict levels for Fiscal Year 2025. As a result, the Committee will have to make tough decisions regarding the allocation of resources in the upcoming year. It will then be up to each legislative branch agency to utilize those resources to meet their respective missions, while addressing the needs of their workforce.

Please describe the impacts to your agency if the Fiscal Year 2025 allocation requires your agency's budget to remain at the Fiscal Year 2024 level. In particular, please describe the specific impacts the allocation would have on your personnel as well as your ability to meet the agency's short and long-term goals.

GAO Answer. A flat budget for the FY2025 year would have a devastating effect on our ability to meet congressional needs. With mandatory, annual personnel and inflationary cost increases, a flat budget is a budget cut. We would not be able to maintain the size of our current workforce. Thus, our capacity to respond to congressional needs would be reduced.

We are a knowledge and people-based organization. Over eighty percent of our budget is devoted to personnel costs. We would not be able to achieve the necessary cost savings to operate under a flat budget without reducing personnel costs. Thus, we would be forced to reduce the size of the workforce. We would attempt to do this through attrition and limiting hiring to only the most critical vacancies. If we were not able to achieve the necessary reductions in the size of the workforce through attrition, we would need to consider other options to cut personnel costs, including furlough days, buy-outs, and a reduction-in-force. We would also eliminate other personnel benefits that we use to attract and retain staff, such as student loan repayments.

We would also need to reduce audit support spending, including limiting travel for important audit site visits and the purchase of specialized data, such as prescription drug pricing data. We would also pause efforts to modernize our IT systems and equipment and continue to defer needed maintenance on the building. These actions increase the risk of system or equipment failures, decrease efficiency, and undermine our ability to conduct empirical research to respond to Congressional needs.

With a smaller workforce, we would not be able effectively support Congress. We routinely receive over 600 requests for reviews each year, in addition to hundreds of requests for testimonies and technical assistance. The 2024 NDAA alone required 115 GAO studies. With fewer staff resources, it would take longer for us to get to these requests, if at all. Each year our work yields tens of billions of dollars in financial benefits and hundreds of programmatic and operational benefits. In FY 2023 alone, our work generated about \$70.4 billion in financial benefits, a return of \$84 on every dollar invested in GAO. We also recorded over 1200 programmatic and operational benefits in the areas of public health, national security, and public safety, among others. With fewer staff resources and, in turn, fewer audits, we would be unlikely to continue to deliver these levels of returns.

Our experience with past budget cuts has shown it takes years to fully recover. For example, during the budget sequestration of the early 2010s, the size of our workforce dropped from 3,350 FTE to below 2,850 FTE. It took us until 2022 to build back to this level of capacity. To prevent furloughs during the sequestration, we delayed much needed IT upgrades; this led to system failures, inefficiencies, and cost increases. We are in the middle of our 5-year IT modernization plan; we would again need to pause these efforts with a flat budget.

Limiting hiring, even for a year, also has long term staffing consequences. This would be particularly problematic in areas we have bolstered in recent years to meet Congressional priorities. This includes science and technology, national security, healthcare, computer security, and fraud prevention.

We recruit across the nation to bring on the top talent needed to address the challenging public policy, management, and technical issues we get asked to examine. A key source of talent for us is our intern program, through which we hire many

employees. Not being able to hire graduating interns creates a chilling effect with the students and the top-tier universities and colleges with whom we partner. Building back the trust and confidence with the students and universities that we are a reliable and viable employer takes time.

A flat budget for FY2025 would have both short- and long-term consequences for GAO and our ability to serve Congress. It also reduces the amount of congressional oversight over Federal programs at a time when these programs and the domestic and international challenges facing the United States have grown in scope and complexity.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. HUGH HALPERN, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

Question. In GPO's FY 2025 budget request, the agency discusses the investments it has made in modernizing internal printing and information technology systems, and discusses some of the services it provides to other Federal agencies. Those other Federal departments and agencies are similarly working to leverage modern technology and systems to improve their own communications.

Please describe how GPO is working with other Federal agencies on strategies to procure and implement modernized printing and transactional communications to improve these agencies direct interactions with taxpayers, beneficiaries, veterans, and other constituencies. In particular, please describe how GPO is encouraging the use of color, cameras, modern interfaces and software, and other existing technology and solutions to improve service and increase efficiency in these modernizing efforts.

Answer. GPO is helping Federal agencies improve their communications with the American people—and promote an American informed—in several key ways. Perhaps the most prominent examples are the capabilities we can now share with our customers through GovInfo and XPub.

As you know, GovInfo is our online digital repository—the only ISO 16363 Trusted Digital Repository in the world—which supported over 1 billion downloads of public information in the past fiscal year. It is a marvel made possible by the continued support of this Committee and has transformed the way we make publications available to the public. Where GPO once had to print more than 20,000 copies of the daily Congressional Record and mail them across the country, we can now reach millions of Americans by simply posting the daily Congressional Record online, which we aim to do by the beginning of each new business day.

Each year, we also upload more than 100,000 digital packages (i.e., a published volume) to GovInfo, so the collection of government information available at one's fingertips at www.govinfo.gov is growing. We just added the complete set of United States Statutes at Large dating back to 1789 to GovInfo, including the text of the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, amendments to the Constitution, treaties with Indians and foreign nations, presidential proclamations, and treaties and international agreements approved by the Senate.

One of GovInfo's most significant recent contributions to enhancing our Federal customers' ability to communicate with the American people has come through the development of the new Congressionally Mandated Reports (CMR) web portal, which was created at the direction of Congress.

Federal agencies are now required by law to send reports mandated by Congress to GPO so that we can make them electronically available through GovInfo's CMR portal, which went live in December 2023. As of May 22nd, the portal had 352 CMRs posted by 66 agencies.

We are also encouraged that the development of our new composition engine, XPub, is nearing completion after more than a decade of hard work. XPub will fundamentally transform how GPO and Congress work together to produce bills, resolutions, amendments, the Congressional Record, committee reports, and other congressional publications. It will improve our workflows' speed, accuracy, and efficiency and decrease the likelihood of breakdowns in production.

The old system XPub is replacing is called MicroComp. It was put into service in the early 1980s and is barely holding together. A workhorse tool that has proven its worth over the past five decades, MicroComp just really can't be modified any further to deliver the functionality that Congress needs today. It is obsolete, challenging to maintain, and prone to breakdowns.

The current version of XPub is in the user acceptance testing phase with the House and Senate for congressional bills, resolutions, amendments, and public laws. When our customers adopt XPub, hopefully later this year, features will include in-

tegration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills and a new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws. It is going to take some time to transition to XPub fully, but once the shift is complete, congressional users are going to be working with a much more user-friendly and productive tool.

The development of XPub and other advances in printing technology are providing us with an entirely new level of flexibility with congressional documents, whether they are displayed digitally or in print. For example, the new digital inkjet presses GPO employs are capable of cost-effective printing on any size paper with a wide variety of features, including color.

We hope to leverage our investment in XPub for other agencies, whether that's OMB's production of the Budget of the United States, or many other agencies that must submit reports to Congress. While it will take time to build out other applications, we believe that XPub holds promise for almost all our customers.

Advances like these, coupled with a congressional willingness to reexamine longstanding practices to improve outcomes for lawmakers, staff, and the public, have led to a bicameral, bipartisan effort to develop a new design template for committee reports and hearings called Project Common Press.

With the full support of the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP), GPO has started the Project Common Press focus group work of gathering our customer requirements for what a new format might look like. To date, we have completed our first round of focus group meetings with the JCP staff, House and Senate institutional officers, and House and Senate committees. With their feedback, we are further refining our designs and look forward to continuing that dialog with congressional stakeholders in the coming year.

Beyond our work for Congress, GPO's Creative Services and Digital Media team helps a great number of Federal agency customers apply the latest in computer-assisted design technology and contemporary styles to their publications and media products. Their work is exceptional, and they have earned well-deserved recognition for the high-quality products they created throughout this past year. In fact, after reviewing more than 10,000 entries in 2023, Graphic Design USA magazine conferred four Graphic Design awards on Creative Services for their impressive work including the 2023 Capitol Christmas Tree logo for the U.S. Forest Service; an Early Stages Development Guide for the District of Columbia Public Schools; a Conflict De-escalation Toolkit for the National Park Service; and the National Science Foundation's Office of the Inspector General logo.

In addition, our Customer Services business unit, which manages our print procurement and associated operations, also provides Federal agency customers with a broad range of contemporary services employing the latest in print and digital document production technologies.

For example, Customer Services contracts 508 compliance services for customer agencies to make legacy PDF documents and forms more accessible for citizens. Such services fulfill section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 7949(d)) requirement that agencies give disabled employees and members of the public access to information comparable to that available to others. GPO provides Federal agencies with 508 services that include compliance consulting as well as the creation, remediation, and distribution of section 508 compliant PDF files from legacy documents or electronic files.

Customer Services also provides customer agencies with contracted scanning and digitization solutions of tangible documents, including optical character recognition (OCR) for searchability, indexing, and metadata creation to enhance access and efficiency of accessing records for beneficiaries and veterans. Often these services include scanning of microfiche and 35 mm slides or comparable outdated media and the digitization of records consistent with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) archival standards.

Customer Services also provides expert-level guidance, support, and contract management services through our 951-M Program. This program provides equipment solutions for customer agencies seeking to deploy sophisticated printing and reproduction technologies to enable them to produce the high-quality products they need in-house to communicate with veterans, beneficiaries, and taxpayers nationwide. This contract vehicle also allows agencies to procure high-speed scanning and digitization equipment and services, an increasingly popular product.

Question. The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 resulted in strict levels for appropriations in Fiscal Year 2024 and has similarly strict levels for Fiscal Year 2025. As a result, the Committee will have to make tough decisions regarding the allocation of resources in the upcoming year. It will then be up to each legislative branch agency to utilize those resources to meet their respective missions, while addressing the needs of their workforce.

Please describe the impacts to your agency if the Fiscal Year 2025 allocation requires your agency's budget to remain at the Fiscal Year 2024 level. In particular, please describe the specific impacts the allocation would have on your personnel as well as your ability to meet the agency's short and long-term goals.

Answer. Aware of the possible funding constraints next year, GPO developed our FY 2025 Budget with the goal of requesting adequate resources to maintain key technology investments, fulfill all our obligations to our congressional and Federal agency customers, and continue the aggressive workforce development efforts we need to thrive in the future.

We believe we succeeded in that goal. Our FY 2025 appropriations request of \$136,089,000 is comprised of three critical components, two of which we requested be funded at or slightly below FY 2024 levels: our FY 2025 request for the Congressional Publishing account remains flat at the FY 2024 level of \$83,000,000 and our FY 2025 Business Operations Revolving Fund account request of \$11,425,000 is slightly below the \$11,605,000 the Committee provided in FY 2024. It is through this Building Operations Revolving Fund account that GPO funds critical technology investments including the XPub composition engine and our GovInfo online digital repository.

Overall, GPO's FY 2025 appropriation request of \$136,089,000 represents a 3.1 percent increase over the FY 2024 appropriation of \$131,999,000. That increase is driven primarily by mandatory pay increases and price level changes affecting our Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents (PIP) appropriations account, the third component of GPO's FY 2025 request.

Nearly half (43 percent) of the PIP appropriation covers employee compensation and benefits—in FY 2025 that would be \$17.8 million of the overall \$41.7 million request. Should our FY 2025 PIP request not be funded in its entirety, the mandatory Federal pay raise expected in January 2025 may need to be funded by reducing staffing in the program which could diminish the program's ability to accomplish its mission.

As such, we are particularly concerned about the operational impacts of any reductions in our FY 2025 requested PIP appropriation, and would welcome the opportunity to temper such impacts on our request for the PIP account should the Committee not be able to fulfill GPO's overall FY 2025 appropriations request.

Potential reductions to GPO's request for our other two appropriations accounts would impact staffing in different ways. For instance, while reductions to GPO's request for the Congressional Publishing Appropriation account would not directly impact staffing, they could cause some production costs, including mandatory pay raises, to be under-recovered in publishing services provided to Congress.

Reductions to GPO's request for the Business Operations Revolving Fund appropriation account would also not have a direct impact on staffing, but could hinder the development of both the GovInfo and XPUB initiatives funded through this appropriation. These investments have been congressional priorities and support the transition to an all-digital workflow and expanded and improved access to Government information. Our FY 2025 appropriations request was designed to keep these two initiatives on schedule and a reduction in funding would likely cause improvements in these projects to slow down and fall behind the current schedule.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. DR. PHILLIP SWAGEL, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

Question. The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 resulted in strict levels for appropriations in Fiscal Year 2024 and has similarly strict levels for Fiscal Year 2025. As a result, the Committee will have to make tough decisions regarding the allocation of resources in the upcoming year. It will then be up to each legislative branch agency to utilize those resources to meet their respective missions, while addressing the needs of their workforce.

Please describe the impacts to your agency if the Fiscal Year 2025 allocation requires your agency's budget to remain at the Fiscal Year 2024 level. In particular, please describe the specific impacts the allocation would have on your personnel as well as your ability to meet the agency's short and long-term goals.

Answer. If the 2025 allocation required CBO to remain at its fiscal year 2024 level, the agency would not be able to continue to add to its workforce, and its responsiveness to the Congress would be constrained. CBO's fiscal year 2024 appropriation of \$70 million is enabling the agency to grow from 267 at the end of March

2024 to 276 positions by the end of September 2024. CBO will fill key positions in the areas of healthcare, national security, and long-term analysis.

Operating at its fiscal year 2024 level in fiscal year 2025 would result in gaps in the agency's responsiveness to the Congress. CBO's fiscal year 2025 request of \$73.5 million is designed to support growing to 285 employees. Remaining at the fiscal year 2024 funding level would preclude hiring additional analysts to improve the agency's capabilities to produce dynamic analysis, long-term estimates, analysis of defense weapons systems, and estimates of credit programs (like student loan programs), as well as to enhance the agency's responsiveness in producing cost estimates and providing technical assistance.

To avoid having to shrink next year with a \$70 million budget, CBO would also have to take other steps to limit spending, possibly including reducing the use of outside experts, shifting to more junior personnel, deferring training, constraining the compensation of current employees, and limiting purchases of data and information technology. Such steps would diminish CBO's effectiveness.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator REED. With that, unless you have a comment, I would adjourn the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 2:46 p.m., Wednesday, May 8, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 2:32 p.m., in room SD-124, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed (Chairman), presiding.
Present: Senators Reed, Murphy, Van Hollen, and Fischer.

U.S. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Good afternoon. The Subcommittee will come to order.

I would like to welcome everyone to the second of our fiscal year 2025 budget hearings for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

Today, we have with us Dr. Carla Hayden, the Librarian of Congress, and Mr. Joseph DiPietro, the Acting Architect of the Capitol. I would like to thank you for joining us here today to testify on your Agency's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

I would also like to welcome Ranking Member Fischer, with whom I work very closely in the Senate, and thank her for her cooperation.

Let me begin by, again, thanking the women and men of your agencies who work every day to facilitate the work of the Senate. Without each of them, the Senate would not be able to perform its constitutional responsibilities on behalf of the American people.

And I would ask unanimous consent that the witnesses' written testimony be placed in the hearing record; without objection, so ordered.

As I noted in our first hearing last week, the Legislative Branch Agencies have submitted fiscal year 2025 budget request that account for a \$544 million increase over the fiscal year 2024 Legislative Branch enacted appropriation. While we do not yet have subcommittee allocations, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, enacted strict levels for appropriations again in fiscal year 2025.

As I said in our previous hearing, we will be making very difficult decisions for the allocation of resources provided to the Legislative Branch in fiscal year 2025. It will then fall upon the heads of each Legislative Branch Agency to utilize those resources to

meet their respective missions while addressing the needs of their workforce. This will not be an easy fiscal year, but I am confident that the Legislative Branch can meet the challenge.

For fiscal year 2025, the Library of Congress is requesting \$943.7 million in spending authority, including \$897.8 million in appropriated funds, which is an increase of \$46 million over the fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

This request includes \$625 million for Library of Congress operations, \$61.5 million in direct appropriations for the operations of the Copyright Office, \$145.5 million for the operations of the Congressional Research Service, and \$66 million for the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled.

The Library of Congress' budget request includes funding for such things as the continuation of upgrades to preservation, technical systems, and equipment used to digitize and preserve collection items, increasing the digital collections processing capacity and infrastructure at the Library, and the continued support of the Veterans History Project, the Louis-Houghton Civics and Democracy Initiative, Teaching with Primary Sources, and many, many other important initiatives.

Additionally, the request includes funds to continue to expand the data analytics capacity of the Congressional Research Service, the continued modernization of systems and processes at the U.S. Copyright Office, and the continuation of services at the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled.

The Library of Congress performs critical work that goes far beyond serving the Legislative Branch. I look forward to hearing from Dr. Hayden on the exceptional work of her Agency to improve access to our Nation's treasures and Library services for the American people, as well as hear about the Agency's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

Today, we will also be reviewing the Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

Before I address the Architect of the Capitol's request, I would like to thank Mr. DiPietro for stepping in to serve as the second Acting Architect of the Capitol. He comes to this role to continue the efforts started by Ms. Rexroat who served as the caretaker of the Agency until a new Architect of the Capitol is selected. Thank you very much.

The last few years have been a tumultuous time for the men and women who work at the Architect of the Capitol, please share our appreciation to your workforce for everything they do to keep the facilities and grounds of the Capitol Complex operational every day.

The Architect of the Capitol is seeking an appropriation of just over \$1 billion, which is an increase of \$83.8 million over the fiscal year 2024 enacted level.

While the fiscal year 2025 budget request includes many important projects, it represents a small part of the Deferred Maintenance, Capitol Renewal, and capital Improvement projects that need to be addressed across the Capitol Complex. The request includes funding to support such items as the renovation of the Senate's Daniel Webster Page Residence, the continued refurbishment of elevators within the Senate Office Building, the Cannon Office

Building renewal, the first phase of the replacement of the sprinkler system within the Library of Congress' Jefferson Building, the repairs to the fire alarms within the Jefferson Building, and funding to support continued infrastructure requirements resulting from security assessments across the Capitol complex.

The increase also includes a number of new positions across multiple jurisdictions that are intended to enhance the operations of the Agency.

Again, thank you, Mr. DiPietro, for your service, and I look forward to hearing the Acting Architect's testimony today.

Both agencies have presented very thoughtful budget requests. However, in a challenging fiscal year, it will be difficult to fulfill the requests of our Legislative Branch agencies. The subcommittee will carefully review each budget request and work to address the most critical needs of each Agency to meet its mission and the needs of the workforce.

With that said, the goal of the Senate Appropriations Committee is to continue the normal order for appropriations bills. As such, this subcommittee will be aggressively working to produce a thoughtfully crafted bill that can be considered by the Full Committee and the Senate in the coming months.

And I look forward to the testimony of witnesses, and obviously to working again with Senator Fischer toward this goal.

Now, let me turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Fischer, for her remarks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DEB FISCHER

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our two witnesses today, Dr. Hayden and Dr. DiPietro, for being with us this afternoon for our second Legislative Branch budget hearing.

I want to begin by commenting on the upcoming fiscal year. In fiscal year 2024, the Legislative Branch received an overall cut compared to the enacted level. Under the terms of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, a further cut to the Legislative Branch's allocation for fiscal year 2025 is possible.

We face an uncertain and a likely volatile fiscal year ahead. As we navigate the process and the potential for further cuts, our agencies must be prudent and responsible with their resources. I made this point in our first hearing and I want to make it here as well.

Turning to the budget request, both the Library and AOC are seeking substantial increases. I hope to hear from both of you what your Agency's minimum needs are for fiscal year 2025 and any cost savings that you plan to achieve.

Dr. Hayden, the Library of Congress has a new strategic plan for the next 5 fiscal years that focuses on deploying new technology and digital products to better serve Congress and the American people.

For fiscal year 2025, the Library seeks a 5.1 percent increase above last year's enacted level. In your testimony, I look forward to hearing how the request will help execute the new strategic plan.

Mr. DiPietro, you are the second Acting Architect of the Capitol to come before our subcommittee in the last 2 years, and I am sure you will agree that we need new and more permanent leadership at the AOC. There is much work to be done in stabilizing that Agency going forward, but I do appreciate, totally appreciate everything you are doing to achieve that.

The AOC is requesting slightly over \$1 billion for fiscal year 2025, an almost 9 percent increase above the enacted level. Given the scale of the resources at issue, we must ensure that construction projects are properly scoped, on schedule, and on budget. In your testimony, I hope to hear how the AOC is improving its project management practices.

Thank you again to both of our witnesses for being here today; and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer.

And now, let me recognize Dr. Hayden, please.

STATEMENT OF HON. DR. CARLA HAYDEN, LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Dr. HAYDEN. Thank you, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, for the opportunity to—

Senator REED. Bring that microphone in as close as possible.

Dr. HAYDEN. Thank you both for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2025 budget. In fiscal 2023 and 2024, the Library, with the support of Congress, met its mission to, "Engage, inspire, and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity in both traditional and innovative ways."

And today, with nearly 178 million items in the physical collections, and many more in digital form, the Library remains the steward of the largest collection of information and resources ever assembled, not as a memorial, but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of all.

I would like to also express my gratitude for the ongoing support of the Library, from Congress, and this committee, subcommittee in particular, for funding our IT investments. And I would like to give special thanks for your support of the Visitor Experience.

We will open the first permanent Treasures Gallery in June, this June, and expect that the Youth Center, called The Source, will open in 2025, in time for the Nation's Sesquicentennial in 2026.

I come before you today to discuss the Library of Congress's fiscal 2025 appropriations request for \$943.7 million, a 5.1 increase over the Library's fiscal 2024 appropriation. This request includes \$38.9 million in mandatory pay and price level increases, and the remaining increases represent critical investments needed to meet the Library's mission.

Recognizing that economic conditions are different than they were 8 years ago when I became Librarian, we are requesting the lowest programmatic increase of my tenure. The two new requests for fiscal 2025 further the goals for the Library's new strategic plan, A Library for All, to enhance services, expand access, and strengthen capacity, and foster innovation.

We are asking, first, for an investment to strengthen the Library's infrastructure, including staff with advanced skills to support digital collections processing and acquisition, as we move in-

creasingly toward digital as the preferred format. This includes digital content in copyright deposits, which are central to building our collection.

The second request supports collections handling for the expanded exhibit spaces in the Thomas Jefferson Building that will display over 1,000 items worth millions of dollars, a 50 percent increase over previous year's exhibit capacity. And this request ensures that exhibit items are secure and supported by an appropriate level of trained and experienced staff.

And in keeping with our strategic goals, we are also resubmitting three vital requests that were not funded in fiscal 2024. The first will enable both CRS and the Office of the Chief Information Officer to expand CRS's quantitative data analysis and policy simulation capacity to analyze big data for Congressional clients.

The second will enable the Library to meet the growing demand for accessibility services to improve access to the Library's digital products, materials, and services for Americans with disabilities.

And in the third resubmission, the Library requests expanded contracts and grant staffing as we face an attrition rate as high as 28 percent, along with heavier workloads and increasingly complex contracts, particularly for our IT-related acquisitions.

In summary, the Library's 2025 congressional budget justification advances the necessary work initiated in previous years to move the Library forward while preserving our world-class resources and making them accessible for those who will come after us.

Chairman Reed, and Ranking Member Fischer, thank you again for supporting the Library of Congress, and your consideration of our fiscal 2025 budget request; and I will be very pleased to take your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DR. CARLA HAYDEN, THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2025 budget request.

The mission of the Library of Congress is to "Engage, inspire and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity." Above all, the Library exists to serve. Service to the Congress remains the foundation for the Library's mission every day with analysis, policy consultations, briefings, programs and constituent engagement. The U.S. Copyright Office within the Library promotes creativity and knowledge by administering the nation's copyright system for the benefit of all. And service to the American people—Copyright users, researchers, visitors, teachers, students, veterans, and blind and print disabled citizens, among many others—delivered in countless ways, takes a user-centered approach with access in person and in digital form.

The Library's resources are authoritative, expansive, and evergreen. In a time of rapidly evolving technology in a fast-changing world, the Library of Congress stands as it has for 223 years as the steward of the largest collection of information and resources ever assembled—not as a memorial but as a living source of knowledge and creativity for Congress and the betterment of all. The Library meets its responsibility to collect, preserve and share these treasures every day by constantly renewing the collections and the services it provides to the Congress and the American people. With congressional support, the Library is extensively modernizing and optimizing systems, processes, and staff. Throughout, the Library never stops its drive to engage, inspire and inform, increasingly through digital means.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support that this committee and all of the Congress gives to the Library. In particular, I appreciate the funding you have provided for major Information Tech-

nology (IT) investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools. These investments include the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS); CRS's Integrated Research and Information System (IRIS); the National Library Service's Braille Audio Reading by Download (BARD) and next generation devices; the Library Collections Access Platform (L-CAP); Congress.gov; and the Library's core IT infrastructure and IT security.

I would also like to give special thanks for your support of the Library's Visitor Experience initiative over the last 5 years. We are excited to open the Treasures Gallery in June of this year and we expect the Youth Center, named "The Source," will open by the end of 2025, in time for the nation's semiquincentennial in 2026. Further, in addition to the funds appropriated by the Congress, we have raised more than \$20 million in private donations for this project. We remain in constant coordination with the Architect of the Capitol and are grateful for the Committee's involvement to ensure the success of the Orientation Gallery, a critical element of the project.

I come before you today to discuss the Library's fiscal 2025 appropriations request of \$943.7 million, which represents a 5.1 percent increase over the Library's fiscal 2024 appropriation, including \$38.9 million in mandatory pay and price level increases. The Library has absorbed especially high pay and inflationary increases over the last 3 years, with a 5.3 percent pay raise and inflationary increases at 3.4 percent in fiscal 2024 alone. The need to absorb these increases threatens all that we do and has a permanent impact. This is particularly the case for the Library of Congress, Salaries & Expenses appropriation because it provides centralized support services to the entire Library.

The budget request reflects the resources needed to sustain the Library's mission of service to the Congress and the American people, and its strategic priorities to be digitally enabled, user centered, data informed, inclusive and welcoming, with meaningful collaboration and partnership and active engagement with our communities. It builds on multiyear strategic efforts to rebuild the information technology foundation and to optimize advanced IT systems and business processes, while at the same time enhancing access and customer services. And it invests in the future, ensuring that the Library can safeguard and support its collections, services, and workforce in person and online.

The request aligns with the strategic goals set forth in the new fiscal 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, *A Library for All: Expand access, enhance services, strengthen capacity, and foster innovation*. The goals affirm the Library's user-centered mission of service. The Library's formerly standalone Digital Strategy is now fully integrated into the new Strategic Plan, in recognition that technology must be "baked into all that we do." Digital technology indeed permeates every aspect of the Library as a modern knowledge institution, and it is used deliberately and strategically to meet the needs of a quickly changing world. None of the Library's strategic goals or themes in today's context could be achieved without the contributions of digital technology.

Recognizing that economic conditions are different than they were 8 years ago when I became Librarian, we are requesting the lowest programmatic increase of my tenure—\$11.3 million compared to the highest at \$55 million. We have minimized programmatic increases by deferring those without critical impacts, not because our needs have decreased, but out of concern for the impact of absorbing mandatory pay and price level increases given current economic conditions and other external forces. We have taken great care to make only programmatic requests that are necessary and have a meaningful impact on our service to the Congress and the American people.

The two new requests for fiscal 2025 further the goals in the new Strategic Plan:

Digital Collections Processing Capacity and Infrastructure

In alignment with the Expand Access strategic goal, digital collections processing capacity and infrastructure meet the strategic objective to invest in end-to-end modernization of IT infrastructure to support the centrality of digital collecting and strengthen staff capacity with advanced skills in processing digital content and the supporting IT systems. These resources are necessary to support a host of IT infrastructure and systems to redesign and refresh workflows critical for the Library to meet the objectives, principles and targets to acquire, preserve and make accessible digital content as set forth in the Library's Strategic Plan.

The new initiative for digital collections processing capacity and infrastructure is essential as the Library increasingly moves toward digital as the necessary preferred format for acquiring items for the collections that were born digital or converted from analog form. Existing digital systems that support most digital collec-

tions were developed iteratively more than a decade ago and are in need of investment to better standardize, integrate, and modernize to accommodate the rapidly growing scale of digital collections growth.

The initiative will support the ongoing work to digitize and manage materials from the collections, and the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. To achieve this, the request will provide resources critical to upgrading and improving the IT systems, workflows, and processes necessary to support ongoing work to digitize and manage digital materials from our collections, and to support the continued growth of acquisitions in digital format. Copyright deposits, for example, are central to building the Library's collection, and it is critical for it to be as easy as possible for digital content and metadata delivered to the Copyright Office to be considered for additions to the Library's collections. This request also includes staffing with advanced skills to process and describe content to make it accessible, as well as staff to support IT systems for digital content management and processing.

Center for Exhibits and Interpretation Collections Handling

In pursuit of the Library's strategic goals to expand access and enhance services by transforming in-person experiences the Library will open more than 12,000 square feet of public space in the Thomas Jefferson Building. The expanded exhibition spaces will display over 1,000 items at any given time, a nearly 50 percent increase from previous years. A majority of the objects on view must be rotated every 6 months or less, which means that each item must be reviewed, cataloged, mounted, installed, and deinstalled by trained and experienced registrars. The level of permanent registrar and production staff has remained flat for the last decade, and is not sufficient to accommodate the support requirements to cover the expansion of the Library's exhibition spaces. The Library has stewardship over the collections, including those on display worth millions of dollars. This request is put forward to ensure that additional items on exhibit are secure and supported by an appropriate level of staff.

FISCAL 2024 RE-SUBMISSIONS

In keeping with our strategic goals, we are re-submitting three vital requests that were not funded in the 2024 budget request. These initiatives support the 2024–2028 strategic goals of expanding access, enhancing service, strengthening capacity and fostering innovation. The initiatives are:

CRS.—Expanding Data Analytics Capacity (Strengthening Capacity & Fostering Innovation) will enable both CRS and the Office of the Chief Information Office (OCIO) to expand CRS's quantitative data analysis and policy simulation capacity. It will augment CRS's ability to perform quantitative analysis of both research and operational "big data" for congressional clients, establishing a base process and increased capacity for in-depth data analysis. Congressional Members and Committees have expressed interest in CRS investigating how artificial intelligence (AI) technologies could enhance its work for the Congress.

CRS is working to diversify its new product offerings. Examples include the American Law Division's weekly Congressional Court Watcher distributed to congressional clients interested in notable Federal court cases, an infographic on Middle East Natural Gas, a podcast on AI noting the availability of a published report on the same subject, and a bill summary available in voice version.

CRS is also working to make finding reports and experts easier on CRS.gov and exploring AI and machine learning for analyzing legislative bills and text to expedite summaries and searches. CRS divisions are developing interactive tools for Members, so that Members can determine more easily and immediately how multiple policy approaches might impact specific constituencies. CRS experts are also using big data to improve their analysis. The request includes staffing to strengthen existing capabilities and an investment in the tools and datasets required to broaden the depth of quantitative analysis and models by leveraging big data.

Language from the Joint Explanatory Statement, accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 Public Law 117–328, directs CRS to explore ways in which it could expand the ability to perform quantitative analysis of research data and conduct a feasibility study. The study was completed and presented to Oversight and Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate. In September 2023, the Library awarded a 1 year contract to pilot a small set of cloud-based quantitative data models for CRS consistent with the guidance in the feasibility study. CRS has also initiated an AI working group to explore how AI technology can enhance work for the Congress.

Expanding the Digital Accessibility program (Expanding Access) will more equitably enable the Library to meet its mission in the information age. The Library's digital products, materials, and services must be accessible to all, including those

with disabilities. With that in mind, the Library established a small digital accessibility program in fiscal 2020 with one FTE. This office provides in-house digital accessibility expertise and guidance for Library IT projects and other digital initiatives, utilizing supplemental resources from another office. Additional resources will mature the enterprise digital accessibility program, expanding capacity to meet growing Library demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation. Establishing greater capacity and tools in the Digital Accessibility program will enable the Library to meet growing demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation and to improve access to the Library's digital products, materials, and services for Americans with disabilities. Direct patron and staff feedback, along with preliminary expert assessments, point to a large gap between the Library's products, materials, and services and Federal/international accessibility standards. The Library seeks to expand the program so that accessibility is addressed at the same time the Library enhances current digital products with custom development, releases new IT development efforts, and procures new commercial-off-the-shelf and software-as-a-service products. This includes training staff and integrating accessibility from the beginning of the software development lifecycle.

Expanded Contracting and Grants Directorate staffing (Strengthening Capacity) is requested in response to the staffing shortages stemming from increased contract complexity, and unusually high and sustained FTE attrition. Expanded contracting staff will support comprehensive, optimal acquisition planning, execution, contract management, and oversight. The Library, like other Federal agencies, is facing substantial attrition of its contracting staff as workloads increase and contracts become more complex, particularly for IT-related acquisitions. These are already hard-to-fill positions and a government-wide shortage of contract specialists makes recruitment and retention even more challenging. Additional staffing will support technology innovation and development contracts, integrate digital accessibility into the Library's IT acquisition process and contracts, monitor the Library's 400-plus Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) workforce, and strengthen oversight of policies and procedures. The ability to properly handle increased contract volume and complexity in areas such as development of major IT systems and digital accessibility will be resolved. The requested funds will also be used to integrate a web-enabled solution for the grants lifecycle to support grant application, award, and management processes into the eAcquisition system. By integrating the Grants Management System with the eAcquisition System, an efficient, fully automated CGD office that connects the grants process with the acquisition and financial IT systems will be established.

In closing, the fiscal 2025 budget request carefully furthers the modernization efforts of recent years and supports the goals of the new fiscal 2024–2028 Strategic Plan. In a time of rapid change, in technology, in society, and in the world, the Library has a responsibility to preserve and use its resources for the greatest benefit today and for decades to come. With the consistent support of the Congress, the Library has never and will never stop enhancing and extending its service to this country.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for supporting the Library of Congress and for your consideration of our fiscal 2025 budget request.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHIRA PERLMUTTER, REGISTER OF COPYRIGHTS AND
DIRECTOR, U.S. COPYRIGHT OFFICE

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the United States Copyright Office's fiscal 2025 budget request. The Copyright Office is tasked with overseeing the national copyright registration and recordation systems, advising Congress on copyright policy and legislation, working with the Department of Justice and other Federal agencies on copyright litigation and international matters, conducting administrative and regulatory activity including with respect to statutory licenses, and educating the public about copyright.

I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress on our new Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), with several modules already in production and being used by the public. In addition, processing times for both registration and recordation services remain low. We are well into our current initiative on artificial intelligence; coming up on almost 2 years of smooth operations of our new small claims tribunal; and actively engaged in regulatory work, including the ninth section 1201 triennial rulemaking and a review of the designation of the entities established by the Music Modernization Act (MMA). And public engagement with the Of-

Office is breaking attendance records through stakeholder events and targeted outreach around the country.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

Administration of the Copyright Act

Registration.—The Office continues to effectively administer the national copyright registration and recordation systems. In fiscal 2023, we registered over 441,526 copyright claims involving millions of works. Over the past 3 years, we have markedly improved registration processing times: the average for examining all copyright claims stands at 2.1 months for the first half of fiscal 2024. For fully electronic claims that do not require correspondence, the average is just 1.2 months.¹ Electronic applications with physical deposits without correspondence average 3 months, while paper applications have remained at an average of 4.1 months for claims without correspondence.

Recordation.—In fiscal 2023, the Office recorded 16,592 documents containing titles of 1,165,653 works, including 5,875 documents and 568,618 titles of works through the new self-service portal.² Our online recordation pilot, launched in April 2020, has significantly shortened processing times, with the average from electronic submission to generation of the public record now measured in weeks rather than months. On August 1, 2022, we opened the pilot to all members of the public and have seen an increase in users to over 80% of all recordations. And while the pandemic caused some delays that resulted in longer processing times for paper recordations, we have cut down those times as well.³

Public Records.—The Office is the custodian of many kinds of records related to registration and recordation. We are working to make these records, many going back more than a hundred years, available online. In fiscal 2023, we continued development of the Copyright Public Records System (CPRS) (which includes both recordation and registration records) and hosted 104,095 unique visitors. The CPRS has expanded online access and research options by adding 1,143,779 card catalog records. Furthermore, in 2023 we completed the consolidation of offsite materials from three separate warehouses into our new storage facility in Cabin Branch, Maryland. In February 2024, the facility was dedicated as the Marybeth Peters Copyright Archive, in honor of the eleventh Register of Copyrights.

Licensing.—The Office maintained our effective stewardship of over \$1.6 billion in statutory licensing revenues as of the end of fiscal 2023.⁴ For the sixth consecutive year, we received an unmodified or “clean” audit opinion of the fiscal 2022 statutory licensing fiduciary asset financial statements.

Other Major Activities

The Copyright Office continues to provide advice and impartial expertise to Congress and the courts, and information to the public. Below are a few highlights:

Copyright Claims Board.—By the end of March 2024, over 800 claims had been filed with the Copyright Claims Board (CCB), and it had issued 16 final determinations. Claims have come from forty-six states and thirty-two countries. This past year the Office completed several rulemakings to update the CCB’s processes and operations. The CCB and other Office staff have participated in scores of public events to discuss and promote its use and have reached audiences in-person and virtually from every area of the United States.

Initiative on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence.—In early 2023, the Office announced an initiative to examine the copyright law and policy issues raised by gen-

¹Registration processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/registration/docs/processing-times-faqs.pdf>. For the October 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 timeframe, 82% of all registration claims were eService claims (online claims and electronic deposits); 14% were deposit ticket claims (online claims with separately mailed physical deposit materials); and about 1% were mail claims (paper claim forms and physical deposits).

²There are three primary types of documents that may be submitted for recordation: transfers of copyright ownership, other documents pertaining to a copyright, and notices of termination. The pilot and newly released system are currently focused on only the first category (section 205 documents).

³Recordation processing times are posted on our website at <https://copyright.gov/recordation/>. The Office of Copyright Records is currently processing March 2023 basic (section 205) recordation filings and July 2023 notices of termination. Regardless of the processing time, the effective date of recordation is the date the Copyright Office receives the complete submission in acceptable form.

⁴The Licensing Section is responsible for helping to administer the various statutory licenses and similar provisions, including secondary transmissions of radio and television programs by cable and satellite systems; making and distributing phonorecords of nondramatic musical works; and importing, manufacturing, and distributing digital audio recording devices or media.

erative AI, including the scope of copyright in works incorporating AI-generated content and the use of copyrighted materials in AI training. After convening public listening sessions and hosting webinars to gather information, the Office published a notice of inquiry in August 2023 that elicited over 10,000 comments by the December 2023 deadline. In February, we provided Congress with a detailed update on our 2023 accomplishments (including policy guidance on registration, litigation and Review Board activities, and the notice of inquiry) and our plans for next steps.⁵ In 2024, the Office plans to issue a report in several sections, which will be published separately as they are completed.⁶

Regulatory Work.—The Office has a number of rulemakings underway,⁷ two of which are mandated by law. In July 2023, we commenced the ninth triennial proceeding under section 1201 of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) regarding temporary exemptions to section 1201’s prohibition against circumvention of technological measures that control access to copyrighted works. We have solicited supporting and opposing comments related to any newly proposed exemptions, using the streamlined process of the prior two rulemakings. Public hearings were held in mid-April.

In addition, under the Music Modernization Act (MMA), the Office maintains an oversight role as directed by the statute, as well as engaging in education and outreach activities. In January 2024, we issued a notice of inquiry seeking public comments regarding the periodic review of our designations of the mechanical licensing collective (MLC) and digital licensee coordinator (DLC). The Office also has a number of other open rulemakings underway, including proposed group registration options for two-dimensional artwork and updates to news websites, and proposed clarifications to regulations involving termination rights and the MMA’s blanket license.

Working with Congress and Other Agencies.—The Office provided legal advice and assistance across the government regarding complex areas of copyright law and policy, including Supreme Court and appellate litigation and interagency collaboration on international matters and trade. On March 12, we published a joint study on non-fungible tokens and intellectual property with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.⁸

Outreach and Education.—The Office engages in numerous outreach activities to provide clear and accurate information on copyright law and to raise awareness of the CCB and other Office resources and programs. In fiscal 2023, we hosted or participated in 185 public events and speaking engagements, surpassing the prior fiscal year by 25 percent. We engaged with many different audiences, from copyright stakeholders to lawyers and intellectual property experts to students. Our Public Information Office and our new reading room are now open and provide in-person services by appointment. Last month, we launched a webpage focusing on our economic research agenda and providing easy access to data used in our 2022 study, *Women in the Copyright System*.⁹

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The modernization of the Office’s information technology (IT) continues to be a top priority as well as a strategic goal. We are committed to ongoing updates and improvements so as to avoid repeating the experience of having to overhaul severely outdated legacy systems. The Library transitioned to an agile IT development model that emphasizes continuous development as well as rapid delivery of new functions and features that optimize the stakeholder experience. We have seen the benefits of this model for meeting evolving changes in technology, providing secure and interconnected systems, and managing contract cost increases.

Our Enterprise Copyright System (ECS) development includes workstreams on registration, recordation, public records, and licensing. Under the Library of Congress’s centralized IT structure, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is leading work on user experience design and platform services—that is, the design and architecture capabilities underpinning the ECS.

⁵U.S. Copyright Office, Letter to Senators Coons and Tillis and Representatives Issa and Johnson (Feb. 23, 2024), <https://copyright.gov/laws/hearings/USCO-Letter-on-AI-and-Copyright-Initiative-Update.pdf>.

⁶For more details on the Office’s work on artificial intelligence, see our AI webpage, <https://copyright.gov/ai>.

⁷U.S. Copyright Office, Rulemakings Landing Page, <https://copyright.gov/rulemaking>.

⁸U.S. Copyright Office and U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, *Non-Fungible Tokens and Intellectual Property: A Report to Congress* (March 2024), <https://www.copyright.gov/policy/nft-study/Joint-USPTO-USCO-Report-on-NFTs-and-Intellectual-Property.pdf>.

⁹The webpage and data are available at <https://copyright.gov/economic-research/>.

Historically, four workstreams (registration, recordation, public records, and licensing), have been under the ECS rubric. The Office also collaborates with OCIO on other business priorities enabled by technology. Examples include our work to improve online access to historical public records and to operate our new Contact Center, both discussed below.

Recordation.—Our online recordation system was the first ECS application to be released to the public, enabling recordation of documents under section 205 of title 17. As noted above, in August 2022 full access was provided to all members of the public. We are now incorporating user feedback to make iterative improvements as well as to build new functionality for processing notices of termination. Once that is done, recordation will transition to continuous development.

Copyright Public Records System (CPRS).—Our second ECS application to be publicly released was a pilot for the new Copyright Public Records System (CPRS). This system provides access to registration and recordation data with advanced search capabilities, filters, and improved interfaces for the public and for Office staff. The CPRS has expanded online access and research options by adding 2,418,754 card catalog records. It is poised to replace the existing Copyright Office Online Public Catalog and become the Office's sole source of authoritative online copyright information by summer 2025.

Registration.—Registration is the most complex of the Office's services and the focus of the greatest public attention. During the initial ECS development work, we have made considerable progress on both the external (public) and internal (staff) components of the new registration module with multiple application and deposit workstreams. We have also established a new electronic Deposit (eDeposit) development team to create the enhanced upload and rendering capabilities necessary to support the submission of large numbers of files submitted in one group application, such as photographs, and very large files, such as feature-length motion pictures and television episodes. This eDeposit system is intended to render electronic deposits much more efficiently to staff for examination. With continued support, we plan to conduct stakeholder testing of the upload capabilities by the end of calendar 2024 and conduct testing of the file-rendering functionality soon thereafter.

Licensing.—For the past 3 years, the Office has been developing user experience design and initial automated workflows to replace outdated licensing processes. We are focusing on implementing the statement of account examination processes in ECS and transitioning all royalty accounting processes onto the Legislative Branch Financial Management System to streamline them and eliminate duplication. We expect to make the redesigned licensing processes available for staff use in early 2025.

Historical Public Records.—As part of the Office's commitment to the preservation of and access to our historical records, we are digitizing print and microfilm records and making them available online. This includes the old card catalog,¹⁰ the Catalog of Copyright Entries (CCEs), microfilm, and the record books. Digitization is the first step, to be followed by metadata capture to enhance searchability, with all records eventually available through the new CPRS. Great progress has been made to digitize and make publicly available the Office's 26,000 record books, which contain well over 26 million pages of records between 1870 and 1977. The first 500 books were published on the Library's website in February 2022,¹¹ and now 12,367 books are available online. Work is being done in reverse chronological order from 1977, with the scanned books posted in batches.

Contact Center.—The Office's modernization of customer contact routing and reporting recently achieved a major milestone. Working with the GSA Centers of Excellence, we implemented a best-in-class customer relationship management (CRM) solution to enhance the public's experience with the Office, enable robust data analytics, and provide centralized knowledge management capabilities. This CRM solution builds upon already implemented capabilities to more effectively track and route calls and emails.

Copyright Public Modernization Committee.—In January 2021, the Librarian of Congress appointed a Copyright Public Modernization Committee (CPMC) to en-

¹⁰The Office already digitized and made available online our physical card catalog, which is available in the Virtual Card Catalog (VCC), as well as the CCEs. See <https://copyright.gov/vcc/>. The VCC Proof of Concept represents card records from 1870 to 1977, displayed in JPEG images, from the U.S. Copyright Card Catalog collection. The images are presented in a similar filing order as found in the physical card catalog. Initial work is underway to capture metadata on these cards.

¹¹See U.S. Copyright Office, NewsNet 947, Copyright Office Launches Digitized Copyright Historical Record Books Collection (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://www.copyright.gov/newsnet/2022/947.html>. The scans are posted at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/copyright-historical-record-books-1870-to-1977/about-this-collection/>.

hance communication with external stakeholders about the technology-related aspects of the Office's modernization initiative.¹² The CPMC was originally established for a three-year term and consisted of thirteen members from the publishing, music, and photography sectors, libraries and archives, and other fields.¹³ It has held public meetings twice a year as well as informal briefing sessions. Given the value of the expertise and insights obtained, the Library intends to reauthorize the CPMC for an additional term.

FUNDING AND UPDATE TO 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

The Copyright Office performs all of this work based on a relatively modest budget. We appreciate the Congress' support and the budget we have received in recent fiscal years. To summarize, we are requesting an overall fiscal 2025 budget of \$107 million in funding and 478 FTEs, of which \$45.9 million would be funded through offsetting fees collected in fiscal 2023 and prior years.

The Office's overall budget is composed of three separate budgets or program areas:

- (1) *Basic Budget*.—This funds most of the Office's operations and initiatives, including the majority of payroll-related expenses and the operations of the CCB. Historically, the Basic Budget has been composed of a combination of appropriated dollars and authority to spend fee revenue, with fees constituting close to one half of this funding.
- (2) *Licensing Division Budget*.—This is derived completely from collections of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licensees pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office.
- (3) *Copyright Royalty Judges (CRJ) Budget*.—Although the CRJ program is not part of the Office, we provide it with budget, financial management, and administrative support on behalf of the Library. CRJ appropriated funding supports payroll and partially funds non-pay expenses that are not supported by fees and royalty payments.

In recent years, we have used programmatic requests to implement Congress' statutory requirements as well as to support Office services. For example, the Office requested and obtained \$3.2 million in additional fiscal 2022 funding for the CASE Act¹⁴ to supplement our unfunded fiscal 2021 work, including hiring the CCB staff. For fiscal 2023, the Office obtained a single program increase of \$1.7 million to provide for new positions involving cost analysis, economic analysis, and statistical capabilities, as well as software to support valuable skillsets that we currently do not have.¹⁵ The initial financial support for our modernization initiative, funded for 5 years as part of the fiscal 2019 budget, ended in fiscal 2023. In fiscal 2024, the Office's single program increase of \$4.3 million was obtained for three new USCO positions and contract support to strengthen capacity and sustain progress on continuous development. The other segment of authorized modernization funding was for 7 years and ends in fiscal 2025.

For fiscal 2025, the Office requests an overall budget of \$107 million in funding and 478 FTEs, of which \$45.9 million would be funded through offsetting fees collected in fiscal 2023 and prior years. This budget would cover mandatory pay increases only. For fiscal 2025, we have not requested additional appropriations for our IT work as we are completing the last year of prior Congressional funding.

However, given that work to modernize our IT systems and services is still underway, it is important to highlight that support through appropriated funds will be needed. Both the Office and OCIO anticipate a need for greater financial resources in fiscal 2026 to continue work on all of our IT-related initiatives to timely meet user demands for ECS functionality and to support continuous development for components already in public release.

To summarize, our fiscal 2025 requests for each budget are as follows:

¹²Library of Congress, Announcement of Copyright Public Modernization Committee, 86 Fed. Reg. 8044 (Feb. 3, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-02-03/pdf/2021-02194.pdf>.

¹³See Library of Congress Announces Copyright Public Modernization Committee (June 22, 2021), <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-21-034/library-of-congress-announces-copyright-public-modernization-committee/2021-06-22/>.

¹⁴The fiscal 2022 budget for CASE Act implementation included \$1.0 million in one-time costs for office construction and furniture, audiovisual system acquisition, and development of an on-line case management system, and \$2.2 million in recurring costs (\$1.7 million for salary, benefits, and related costs for the 8 FTEs and \$500,000 for systems operation and maintenance, printing, and other services).

¹⁵Notably, that fiscal 2023 request was fully supported through an increase in offsetting collections authority and did not require an increase in appropriated dollars.

- Basic Budget.*—\$96.9 million and 445 FTEs, comprising \$38.025 million in offsetting fee collections (39%) and \$58.8 million (61%) in appropriated dollars. The request includes mandatory pay-related and price level increases of \$3.9 million.
- Licensing Division Budget.*—\$7.2 million and 26 FTEs, all of which are to be funded from collection of licensing royalties payable to copyright owners and filing fees paid by cable and satellite licensees pursuant to statutory licenses administered by the Office. The requested increase is to cover mandatory pay-related and price level increases of \$0.278 million.
- Copyright Royalty Judges Budget.*—\$3.3 million and 7 FTEs, with \$0.142 million to support mandatory pay-related and price level increases. Of this total, royalties and participation fees offset \$0.629 million (for non-personnel-related expenses). The remainder, \$2.706 million in appropriated dollars, is to cover the personnel and other related expenses of the three judges and their staff.

* * *

The Copyright Office appreciates the Subcommittee’s and Committee’s continued support of our work to further the Constitutional mission of “promot[ing] the progress of science and useful arts,”¹⁶ including continuous IT development for the benefit of the users of our services.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT RANDOLPH NEWLEN, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL
RESEARCH SERVICE

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the fiscal 2025 budget request on behalf of the Congressional Research Service (CRS). I would also like to thank the Committee for its support of our fiscal 2024 request. CRS is currently deploying those resources to support the 118th Congress and to enhance our product and service offerings to ensure that Congress continues to have access to the highest quality research, analysis, information, and consultative support available.

This is my ninth month serving as interim director and it is a privilege to serve the Congress and to work with the talented staff of CRS. In addition to outlining CRS’s budget requirements for the upcoming fiscal year, my testimony will provide an overview of several noteworthy CRS accomplishments in its support for Congress during fiscal 2023. I will also bring the Subcommittee up to date on the Service’s progress with respect to several strategic initiatives and the challenges ahead.

SERVICE TO CONGRESS DURING FISCAL 2023

As in previous years, CRS provided support to almost every Member and committee office in fiscal 2023. CRS experts provided research, analysis, and information across a wide range of legal and public policy areas including: Federal funding for education; environmental policy; foreign affairs; science and technology; regulation of the financial sector; border security and immigration; and tax and fiscal policy. CRS legislative attorneys advised congressional clients on the implications of recent Supreme Court opinions; judicial ethics; social media regulation; and intellectual property and privacy concerns raised by artificial intelligence technology. In addition, analysts and attorneys provided testimony before congressional committees on issues related to Federal contracting; social security; strategic competition in the arctic; congressional oversight; and seating a delegate of the Cherokee Nation in the House of Representatives. The Service also continued to provide support on questions regarding legislative and budget process, congressional oversight, the annual appropriations bills, and the confirmation of judicial and executive branch nominees.

During fiscal 2023, CRS hosted a variety of seminars and programs for Members and staff including its annual Issues and Policies seminar; a Legislative and Budget Process Institute; a series on legal research; and the biennially scheduled Federal Law Update series. The Service also conducted sessions on FEMA disaster assistance; cybersecurity and infrastructure security; and seminar series on issues related to financial services; disruptive technology; COVID 19; and defense. In addition, CRS successfully launched its Congressional Legal Education Forum (CLEF), a program that provides congressional staff a foundational legal education in matters relevant to Congress’s legislative and oversight functions.

The Service posted 117 new videos to CRS.gov and published 36 podcasts on a variety of topics including: the Metaverse, judicial conduct, the executive budget process, Federal research and development (R&D) funding, defense topics, the role

¹⁶U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 8.

of the Federal government in redistricting, and Medicare drug prices. In total, CRS experts responded to over 76,000 congressional requests; prepared nearly 1,200 new products; updated over 1,800 existing products; and conducted over 300 seminars that were attended by approximately 13,000 congressional participants, during fiscal 2023.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

CRS continues to explore innovative approaches to enhance its products and services, to expand access to all congressional users, and to optimize utilization of agency resources. Congress's recent investments in the modernization of CRS are yielding results. The following is a brief summary of CRS's progress in achieving these important goals.

Interactive Graphics and Other Visually-Based Products

CRS is developing new, visually-based products through the efforts of its Data Visualization and GIS Section, within the Office of Publishing (PUB), and under the guidance and oversight of the Interactive Graphics Working Group (IGWG). During the past year, the IGWG has worked to streamline the production of such products, address technical issues that arise, facilitate innovation in interactive displays, and expand interactive visual options. In addition, the Group has explored adaptation of content into interactive infographics within the CRS Insight product line; acquired additional libraries to support more options for creating interactive graphic formats; and worked closely with OCIO to ensure that CRS's IT infrastructure is more compatible with its interactive graphic needs.

As of May 1, 2024, CRS's product line includes 48 Infographics and 26 interactive graphics. CRS is also working on the prototype of a new "storymap" product, a next-generation storytelling platform that puts together multiple visual elements to create a narrative. These innovative products present exciting possibilities for CRS to present its research, analysis, and information to Congress in new, accessible, and user-friendly formats.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

CRS continues to recruit, retain, and professionally develop a diverse, highly skilled workforce. During fiscal 2023, CRS developed 100 recruitment plans for merit selection positions, and attended over 20 recruiting events, many of which were sponsored by minority-serving institutions and organizations with a focus on underrepresented groups. Attendance at these events provided an opportunity to engage with a variety of prospective candidates, to increase awareness of CRS's brand as well as available employment and internship opportunities. The Service also supported several paid summer internship opportunities through the Student Diversity and Inclusion Internship Program. Updates on diversity and inclusion efforts are communicated to staff through messages from leadership, CRS's staff newsletter, and the Service's internal Diversity and Inclusion website.

Exploring Artificial Intelligence Applications

Under the guidance of the CRS AIWG, CRS has initiated a number of AI related activities including: the launch of an Artificial Intelligence Research Portal to provide resources for CRS staff related to the field of AI; evaluation of new, generative AI components of a commercial legal research database; the development of an internal inventory of potential use cases for incorporating AI into the work of the Service; and the issuance of guidance to CRS staff prohibiting the use of Chat GPT or other AI tools in their work for Congress without prior CRS or Library approval.

In collaboration with the Library's OCIO, CRS is also exploring the utilization of automated processes to expedite drafting, reviewing, and publishing of bill summaries and the assignment of geographic and organizational subject terms. These activities involve the evaluation of models and methods using generative AI, traditional AI/Machine Learning, and Natural Language Processing tools, and assessment to identify baseline expectations for acceptable accuracy rates, objectivity, and performance standards for machine-generated summaries and subject terms. We are excited about the potential of AI but proceeding cautiously.

IT Modernization/Integrated Research and Information Systems (IRIS)

CRS continues to work with the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to modernize its IT infrastructure with the deployment of new tools and software to enhance support to congressional stakeholders. The Integrated Research and Information System (IRIS) initiative is a multi-year effort to update the Service's mission-specific information technology to provide CRS staff with the best resources to create and deliver products and services to Congress.

Several applications have been successfully deployed to CRS users. The Minerva request management application was released to users in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023; updates and enhancements continue monthly. In addition, the Text Analysis Program (TAP) for supporting bill summaries and bill comparisons was released in the second quarter of fiscal 2024. CRS and OCIO continue to execute several additional work streams to include CRS.gov website redesign with an enhanced taxonomy and new search capability, authoring and document management, and content management. CRS anticipates a release of the newly redesigned CRS.gov website that includes an enhanced taxonomy and a new search capability early in the fourth quarter.

Technical solutions have been designed and adapted to maintain alignment with Library of Congress and Legislative Branch cloud strategies. Projects are currently proceeding consistent with contractual requirements, schedules, and resources. Solutions are being informed by both internal CRS staff as well as congressional stakeholders. These efforts are essential to modernizing CRS mission-critical applications, to achieve the Library's "digital first" strategy and meet the growing needs of the Congress, in the areas of information research, policy and data analysis, content creation, and product delivery.

Congress.gov

The United States House of Representatives and Senate produce, and own, the data that is accessible to Members of Congress, legislative agencies, and the general public from Congress.gov. This fiscal year marks a historic, behind-the-scenes accomplishment for authoritative information provided by our data partners. First generation, 30–40-year-old out-of-date systems and workflows are being retired.

The Library, including CRS, has worked closely with House and Senate data owners to incorporate data standards and best practices into the new systems and workflows that produce data for Congress.gov. Along with the Library, CRS is deeply appreciative for our data partners' initiatives to improve data quality by standardizing formats for legislative documents. The United States Legislative Markup, or USLM, is a legislative branch-wide standard that is integral to editing and publishing interoperability within the legislative ecosystem. Modernizing behind-the-scenes workflows advances our legislative data partnerships in support of better tracking legislative information and Member contributions through Congress.gov.

We are preparing for the future, and continue to bring historical materials into Congress.gov. To date, researchers can access more than 3.2 million historical and contemporary items from Congress.gov. We remain committed to working with our data partners, including the House Clerk, to continually improve accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of legislative information available from Congress.gov?the official website for U.S. Federal legislative information.

CONAN Modernization

Known officially as the "Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation," CONAN serves as the official record for Congress of the U.S. Constitution's interpretation. In 2019, CRS collaborated with OCIO and the Law Library to introduce a website for CONAN: constitution.congress.gov. The site features hundreds of pages of updated constitutional analysis and content. During fiscal year 2023, CRS legal staff continued to provide comprehensive analysis of the Supreme Court's jurisprudence as it relates to every provision of the U.S. Constitution, including the implications of recently decided cases. To make CONAN more accessible to online users, new and existing content has been drafted and revised in the form of short, granular essays that focus on specific, discrete topics. CRS legal staff have also begun the organizational work to begin preparing the printed pocket parts to the decennial 2022 edition of CONAN, unless a legislative fix obviates the need to continue to produce hardbound and print publications of CONAN. Since the launch of the public website in 2019, CONAN online has received more than fifty million views and has served as a valuable reference source for Congress and the public.

CRS has requested a legislative change to eliminate the requirement to produce the hardbound version of CONAN, which is quickly outdated, and rely exclusively on the CONAN website, which provides timely updates.

Knowledge Management

CRS continues to develop and implement strategies to capture, manage, preserve, and distribute institutional knowledge that it relies upon to provide exceptional service to Congress. CRS staff utilize the Research Portal, which is available on the Service's intranet, as a hub for digital resources. It provides staff with quick and easy access to information needed to research, analyze, and advise on legislative issues. By the end of fiscal 2023, CRS staff had access to 46 research portal sites. The Service sponsored multiple activities to facilitate the sharing of information,

knowledge, and best practices and enable staff to learn from one another's experiences including quarterly Knowledge Cafés, an annual Summer Series on emerging technologies, and communities of practice such as the SharePoint Users Group. In addition, CRS continued its efforts to improve its onboarding and offboarding procedures to ensure the timely transfer of knowledge held by senior analysts, attorneys, and information professionals.

Access to Executive Branch Information

In addition to the legislative change regarding CONAN (see above), CRS has requested an amendment of its authorizing statute to improve access to executive branch information, which will enable the Service to respond to requests from and provide products to Members and their staff in a more timely and authoritative manner.

FISCAL 2025 BUDGET REQUEST AND PROGRAM INCREASES

CRS's budget request for fiscal 2025 is 145.485 million dollars, an increase of 9.405 million dollars (or 6.9 percent) over the amount appropriated for fiscal 2024. The requested increase includes 6.579 million dollars for mandatory pay related and price level increases. It also includes a programmatic increase to support continued enhancement of the Service's quantitative data analysis capabilities and the integration of artificial intelligence technology into CRS's workflow. As in previous fiscal years, staff pay and benefits account for approximately 90 percent of the amount requested by CRS.

Bolstering Quantitative Data Analysis Capabilities

CRS's requested program increase includes approximately 3.5 million dollars¹ and 1 FTE to enhance the Service's capability to perform quantitative data analysis and policy simulation, including the modeling of "big data" sets, for congressional clients. In recent years, CRS has observed growing demand from Members and Committees, to provide this type of analytical support. In the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress encouraged CRS "to explore ways to expand its ability to perform quantitative analysis of research data . . ." and directed the Service to "engage with an external entity to produce a report detailing the feasibility of CRS engaging in the analysis and modeling of big data sets by highlighting the information technology infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain such a capability."

While CRS has conducted some limited quantitative analysis and policy simulation, currently it lacks the capacity to provide this service on a broader scale. In response to the direction provided in the Joint Statement, CRS contracted with a company in fiscal 2022, to conduct a study identifying the IT infrastructure, staffing, and analytical support required to establish and maintain a greater data analytics capability. In September 2023, CRS procured a vendor to pilot a small set of cloud based quantitative data models consistent with the recommendations in the study. Enhancing this area of its service offerings, would enable CRS to provide congressional requestors with a more granular view of the impact of legislative proposals on various demographic groups, as well as the interaction of such policies with other programs.

CRS's Health Insurance Pricing Project has reached a significant milestone with the launch of the cloud-based data pipeline solution, ingesting vast volumes of publicly available health insurance pricing data. CRS has revolutionized its infrastructure and capability to process big data files and compare healthcare costs across health insurers, medical procedures, and healthcare providers. This achievement is particularly promising considering ongoing legislation such as H.R. 7593—the "Modernizing the Congressional Research Service's Access to Data Act." While this bill is still pending, its potential passage underscores the importance of CRS's preparedness to efficiently share and process (big) data files with other agencies.

CRS is also exploring opportunities to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) applications into the day-to-day work of the Service. The Service established an Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG) to make recommendations to CRS leadership on best practices and operational processes necessary for the adoption of AI technologies. CRS's adoption of AI technology promises to create efficiencies in the development and publication of its products for Congress.

CRS would utilize 2.826 million dollars of the requested amount to set up and maintain a secure cloud computing environment, and to contract personnel (data scientists, programmers, and digital interface designers) to develop and maintain

¹This programmatic request is shared between CRS (\$2.826 million) and the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (\$0.643 million/1 FTE).

data analysis models and projects in that environment. The funds would also be used to invest in the software, modeling tools, and training necessary to develop these capabilities. An additional 643 thousand dollars is requested on behalf of the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to hire 1 FTE and provide contractual support to design and support the systems needed to implement the program.

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, CRS's priorities for fiscal 2025 include hosting a successful New Member Seminar in January 2025 for the newly elected Members of the 119th Congress; continuing efforts to strengthen the diversity and inclusiveness of its workforce and working environment; and supporting continuous integration and development of a modernized IT infrastructure. As always, CRS will focus primarily on the delivery of timely, authoritative products, services and programming tailored to meet the needs of the 119th Congress.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, CRS values its role as Congress's trusted resource and is committed to providing exceptional research, analysis, and information to meet the needs of every Member and committee. On behalf of my colleagues at CRS, I thank you again for your continued support and your consideration of our fiscal 2025 request.

Senator REED. Thank you, Dr. Hayden.
Mr. DiPietro, please.

STATEMENT OF MR. JOSEPH DIPIETRO, ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Mr. DIPIETRO. Good afternoon, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

I would also like to thank the members of your staff, particularly Richard Braddock and Molly McCarthy, for their expertise, solution-mindedness, and consistent professionalism.

I welcome this opportunity to share more about the Agency's work in preserving the historic buildings and grounds that inspire our Nation in serving the 30,000 daily occupants and three million annual visitors to the Capitol Campus.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the 2,400 dedicated AOC employees who work diligently to support the daily operations of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, and the many other AOC-managed locations, which cover 18.4 million square feet of historic facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art that make up our historic Campus.

In addition to supporting the daily operations of Congress, the Architect at a Capitol inspires the public by providing tours and exhibits of the U.S. Capitol, the surrounding grounds, and the U.S. Botanic Garden. Our staff remains committed to this cause.

While the Commission works through the process of appointing a permanent Architect, I am honored to serve in this interim role, leading the women and men who work tirelessly to accomplish our mission. I am continually amazed by their professionalism and dedication to service.

The Architect of the Capitol's \$1.03 billion fiscal year 2025 budget request is focused on three key priorities, physical security, life safety, and the critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol Campus.

Additionally, the budget request ensures adequate funding is available for the staffing levels necessary to oversee our planning and project management needs and to deliver quality services to Congress. Through the Agency's strategic initiatives, we continue

to offer world-class service and do the deep work that leads to transformational growth. This focus enables the Agency to build a safer, more inclusive, and more effective workplace.

Across the Agency, we dedicate time and attention to safety training, processes, procedures, and operations. This budget request recognizes these essential measures with a concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks, and interruptions.

Security is a key priority. With the support of this subcommittee and oversight committees, the AOC has made significant progress to improve security—improve the security posture across the Campus. The AOC also coordinates daily with our partners across the Campus to improve security for staff and visitors. Improving physical security is imperative to the operation of the Campus, and we will continue to maintain critical infrastructure while remaining prepared to respond to new developments.

The critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol Campus also remain a top priority. AOC employees work behind the scenes day and night to provide Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Library with facilities and infrastructure to conduct their business. The AOC is committed to a long-term approach to facilities management focused on maintaining and preserving the Capitol Campus while also modernizing these facilities.

With aging infrastructure comes many challenges, the AOC is developing an Enterprise Asset Management System that will provide a structured approach for developing, coordinating, and controlling asset-related activities. An established asset management system will provide additional detail to improve data-driven fiscal decisions and prioritize projects that reduce backlog.

As you know well, the safety, physical security, and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol Campus are a 24-hour-a-day operation that could simply not be accomplished without hard work. As I close my statement today, I would again like to thank the AOC staff for their professionalism and dedication.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for your continued support and consideration of the Architect of the Capitol's fiscal year 2025 budget request.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOSEPH R. DIPIETRO, ACTING ARCHITECT, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request for the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). We are committed to working closely with you and your staff to ensure the AOC meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. Senate in service to the American people.

On behalf of myself and the AOC leadership team, allow me to express our deep gratitude to the 2,400 hardworking, devoted AOC employees who tirelessly carry out their duties each day to support the functions of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress (Library), and the many other AOC-managed facilities.

I joined the AOC in 2023 as the Chief of Operations. This office oversees the lifecycle operations and maintenance of the Capitol campus's buildings, grounds, gardens and infrastructure. In this role, I establish policies, standardize procedures, and coordinate operations and facility management functions across the AOC's operational jurisdictions.

As you know, I was asked to take the mantle of agency leadership as the Acting Architect effective February 9, 2024. Leading our team is both an honor and great responsibility which I take with dedication and care. One of my initial goals is to

work closely with AOC staff to continue to foster trust and confidence in AOC leadership and emphasize our appreciation for their exceptional work. I am committed to transparent and timely communication to ensure accountability and coordination with this Subcommittee, Congress and AOC-internal entities.

I. OVERVIEW

The AOC plays a vital role in supporting the day-to-day operations of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Library. Our staff works tirelessly to preserve and maintain over 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art. This 24 hour a day, seven day a week operation works in concert to preserve our historic buildings and improve aging infrastructure.

The FY 2025 budget request of \$1.03 billion reflects an 8.8 percent increase from the FY 2024 enacted funding. It builds upon the accomplishments of the previous fiscal year by addressing critical and urgent priorities such as physical security, life safety and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus. Furthermore, this budget request includes funding to increase staffing levels necessary to oversee planning, acquisition and project management in order to deliver quality services to Congress. The FY 2025 budget submission acknowledges the fiscal challenges facing our nation and the Committee.

Prioritizing Physical Security & Life Safety

Ensuring physical security and life safety is paramount.

With your support, the AOC has made significant strides in enhancing security measures across the campus. Projects identified after the completion of the physical security assessment in 2022 are prioritized to implement consistent security standards campuswide. The FY 2025 budget request aligns with our coordinated approach to address security projects, consisting of significant construction or system replacement requirements to support the missions of the United States Capitol Police and House and Senate Sergeants at Arms.

The life safety of our workforce and visitors is also a critical focus. Across the agency, we dedicate time and attention to safety training, processes, procedures and operations. This budget request recognizes these essential measures, with projects and requests that focus on supporting our concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks and interruptions.

II. SUPPORTING THE SENATE COMMUNITY

The AOC's FY 2025 budget request highlights significant priorities for the Senate office buildings and Senate operations. Developed in close collaboration with this Subcommittee and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the FY 2025 budget request ensures that the critical needs for the Senate office buildings and operations are met.

The Daniel Webster Page Residence project will repair the building's infrastructure deficiencies, correct non-accessible conditions, and modernize the facility to ensure safety and meet the needs of the Senate Page Program. The FY 2025 budget request for phase two of this project is critical to support this historic building's interior and exterior restoration needs. In phase two the AOC plans to upgrade the interior spaces, modernize the elevator and mechanical systems, address interior non-compliant accessibility conditions, improve the site landscape and hardscape, repair the roofing system, remove and rebuild the foundation and footings at lightwells and the east stair, implement a stormwater management system, and replace the electrical distribution panel. These improvements will provide an accessible and reliable building with improved comfort, convenience and functionality that fits within the appropriate aesthetic of a residential-scale dormitory and school located within a historic building.

Two additional priorities in the FY 2025 budget request are the Senate Committee Hearing Room Upgrades and Elevator Refurbishment Programs. This funding request covers the second year of a comprehensive renewal of the Senate's 32 hearing rooms and related infrastructure over a projected 15–20-year period. The Senate Elevator Refurbishment Program budget request covers 1 year of a multi-year program to refurbish and modernize 46 elevators and associated elevator machine rooms in the Senate buildings. Senate elevators require full refurbishment every 15–20 years. The work will be scheduled to refurbish one elevator per bank at a time, which will minimize disruption to the Senate community. The budget request will provide funding to refurbish six elevators a year at an estimated cost of \$500,000 for each elevator.

III. MODERN MANAGEMENT OF AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Aging facilities and infrastructure pose ongoing challenges exacerbated by increasing material costs and competition for skilled laborers. The AOC's funding request addresses essential issues like hearing room modernization, mechanical system replacements, and fire alarm and sprinkler replacement. The AOC is committed to a long-term approach to facilities management—focused on maintaining and preserving the Capitol campus while also modernizing these facilities. The AOC is also developing an Enterprise Asset Management system to provide a structured approach for developing, coordinating and controlling asset-related activities across their life cycle. An established asset management system will provide additional detail to improve data-driven fiscal decisions and prioritize projects. This approach will also help address backlog and deferred maintenance needs.

IV. RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS & MEETING MISSION REQUIREMENTS

The AOC remains focused on improving employee development and morale. Our Human Capital Strategy revolves around three pillars: talent acquisition, talent development, and engagement and retention of employees.

The AOC's talent acquisition goal is to attract, recruit and onboard a highly skilled and diverse workforce to meet the agency's current and future mission needs. Once on our team, we work to develop and retain these talented employees. Notably, our staff accomplished more than 40,000 individual staff and career development trainings in FY 2023 and have completed 22,000 trainings year-to-date in FY 2024. The AOC is dedicated to providing training and resources for our employees to excel in their roles and support seamless operations.

V. CONCLUSION

On behalf of the hardworking public servants at the AOC, I extend our gratitude to this Subcommittee for your ongoing support. Your dedication and partnership in service to the American people is integral to our daily operations and mission accomplishment. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your time and support in consideration of the AOC's FY 2025 budget request.

BUDGET LEVELS AND AGENCY IMPACTS

Senator REED. Thank you very much. Thank you both for your excellent testimony.

Senator Fischer has left to vote. She will return. But let me lead off with, I think, an obvious question. Both Senator Fischer and I have indicated how challenging this budget is, something you already know.

So I will ask each of you, beginning with Dr. Hayden, if you have to operate at or below the 2024 level, what are the impacts to your Agency's ability to achieve your mission? Dr. Hayden.

Dr. HAYDEN. One of the first effects would be a decrease in our buying power, which would actually, at the 2024 level, cut the Library by approximately \$39 million due to mandatory pay and inflationary non-pay. And the 5.1 increase that the Library has for 2025, 85 percent of that is for inflation and pay and non-pay.

So the first thing we would do, and we have been doing it, in fact, is take a very, very conservative approach to hiring and holding off on new hires because our greatest asset is our staff, and we would want to make sure we protect them. So to avoid layoffs, furloughs, we would implement, and we have been implementing, very conservative hiring plans.

We would also have to reduce our software development spending, that would affect our modernization projects that are going along quite nicely. And we would definitely have to reduce our public events and programs. That would be the immediate.

Senator REED. Thank you. Mr. DiPietro, please.

Mr. DIPIETRO. Okay. So being held flat at the 2024 levels would be challenging. We have got a number of projects that we have included in the 2025 budget for the Senate Office buildings that deal with modernization of the elevators. We have funding in place that we are requesting for hearing room modernization.

We have requested additional funds to develop a facilities plan for the Senate to start looking at the facility needs of the jurisdiction. There is a \$50 million request for the Page Residence to have enough funding in place so that we can modernize that residence, which involves moving the pages out of there into some swing space so we can go in there and completely modernize the building and then allowing them to move back.

There is multiple-year money in there for some water line replacements inside one of our office buildings. And then we have funding in place for additional personnel that we are seeking within some of the jurisdictions, but within our Capitol construction operations appropriation. We are asking for additional personnel to support human resources for hiring, for our acquisition and contracting piece that we have there to help us award contracts more efficiently. There is additional funding in there for AOC University to hire four additional personnel.

AOC University is the training arm of the AOC. It is a new initiative that we have. Last year, through AOC University, we had over 40,000 trainings that were taking place by our employees in 2023. So far this year, we are over 22,000. So depending on where the cuts came from, it can impact any of those initiatives.

LIBRARY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

Senator REED. Thank you both. Again, it is important for us to understand the consequences as we move forward. I appreciate that.

Dr. Hayden, one of your major priorities, and you have indicated it several times, is modernization of the Library, and again, if we are operating under a constrained budget, what are your highest information technology priorities for fiscal year 2025, and how would they be impacted?

Dr. HAYDEN. With our first priority to maintain the most valuable asset, the people. The second would be to continue the modernization projects that have been started over the last several budget cycles. They are ongoing, and they would have to slow down.

And that would include services for the public and Congress, Congress.gov, the CRS Initiative, really the Enterprise Copyright System that has made great strides and has a lot of public and stakeholder interest, the National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled Modernization with the e-Reader projects, and then the core of the Library's modernization effort in terms of collections, the Library Collections Access Platform (L-CAP) is for that. So that would be very difficult for us to continue without support.

Senator REED. And a lot of that would be reducing the proposed technology purchases, both hardware and software.

Dr. HAYDEN. Right. We have a number of legacy systems that are beyond their expiration date.

Senator REED. Thank you. Mr. DiPietro, everyone running an organization these days is looking for valuable talent. And one of the factors is can they have care for their children? How would the ability to provide child care subsidies affect your ability to recruit, retain highly skilled professionals?

Mr. DIPIETRO. So being able to provide a child care subsidy I think would help us recruit folks that work in our jurisdictions, the trades folks, and some of our lower graded employees, being able to give them something towards that would be very important.

We have a human capital strategy that has three different pillars. The first is talent acquisition, so identifying talented people to work for the Agency. The second pillar is development of that talent, and then the third one is retaining that talent. So I believe that child subsidy would help us to retain the folks that we are able to recruit and train here at the AOC.

Senator REED. Thank you very much. In the absence of Senator Fischer, let me recognize Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to both of you. Thank you for the fantastic work you do on behalf of our country, and on behalf of all the folks who work on this Campus.

I just have one question, or one line of question is for you, Mr. DiPietro. I now have a new goal when it comes to the restoration of the Mountains and Clouds. I would like for it to be completed before I die.

And I care about it, as you know, but I will state it for the record because the sculpture that sits in the middle of the Hart Atrium is a product of a part-time Connecticut resident, Alexander Calder, who did much of his modeling and construction of his big sculpture work in Litchfield County, Connecticut.

But also as a fan and patron of the arts, I think it is kind of weird that we continue to have half a piece of art in the Hart Atrium. It was as if you had a painting in your office, somebody lopped off half of it, and you just kept the other half up on the wall for 10 years. That is essentially what we have done with Mountains and Clouds. But I have never seen anything go this slow.

And it sort of strikes me. I know I have dealt with multiple architects and multiple staff members, and everybody pledges to be doing the right thing, but it has always felt to me like the Architect does the minimal amount possible to try to get the Clouds back up there. And that it is only because of people like me pushing that we make any progress at all. It just does not stand to reason that it would take two decades to get this work of art back to its original form.

So what can you tell us about the status of this project? And are we—is there any chance that before I leave the Senate, or at least before I die, we can get the Clouds back up there?

Mr. DIPIETRO. So Architect of the Capitol has been working with the Calder Foundation and the Secretary of the Senate on that project. So there is no appropriated money associated with that project from AOC that we are using for that. It is all coming through the Foundation.

So we have been working with the Foundation, we have been working with the Secretary of the Senate on being able to receive

money from the Foundation. So we can do the piece of work that the Architect is responsible for.

So that would be, you know, the Foundation is going to rebuild the Clouds and put all that back together. And then to be able to get all that—get the materials into the building, it is a considerable effort to be able to do that, and so we are working with them on the design of that.

I believe some funding was just donated to Congress for that from the Foundation. And we have been working with them to get the design started on that portion of the project.

Senator MURPHY. Have you delivered to the Foundation a schedule that you would like them to operate under?

Mr. DiPIETRO. Yes, I believe we have. But I would have to have my staff get back to you with that.

Senator MURPHY. Yes. I mean, I think it is worthwhile for the Architect to drive the time line rather than the Foundation to drive the time line, or for me to drive the time line. I think it would be nice to be able to give some certainty as to when this work of art, very deeply rooted in my State of Connecticut, is back to full form.

So you certainly hear my frustration. My staff for 12 years now has heard my frustration about this, and I look forward to continue to work with you on it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy. Let me take up, and begin a second round as we anticipate the return of Senator Fischer.

Mr. DiPietro, the Architect of the Capitol plays a critical role in the Presidential Inauguration, and I know you are already beginning to plan along with many other agencies. And I know we don't want to discuss law enforcement, sensitive topics in a hearing like this, but in general, how are preparations going for the inauguration?

Mr. DiPIETRO. I think our preparations for the inauguration are going well. We received the funding in our last fiscal year to be able to support that. We have issued a contract for the construction of the stand on the west side of the Capitol. We have plans in place to start with some of the security preparations come August time-frame, or so, which will get us ready to start building that stand after Labor Day, that we should be ready to start doing that.

So I think we have what we need to be able to support that effort. Our Capitol Building jurisdiction and our chief security officer are leading that for the AOC.

Senator REED. And any particular challenges you have already identified?

Mr. DiPIETRO. We have been working through those. We had some challenges with respect to fencing, and things like that, but we have worked with our partners in the Sergeant at Arms and in the U.S. Capitol Police to resolve those.

LIBRARY'S VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

And Dr. Hayden, you have been extremely supportive of the Library's efforts to transform the visitor experience at the Library of

Congress, and I think you mentioned you have good news. And if you would like to elaborate on that, please do so.

Dr. HAYDEN. And we have worked closely with the Architect of the Capitol during this whole project, and we are extremely thankful to this subcommittee for its support because in less than four weeks, and I can give a date, June the 10, there will be a grand opening of the David M. Rubenstein Treasures Gallery.

And this will allow the Library to showcase some of the all-American treasures in our collection, from the contents of Abraham Lincoln's pockets the night he was assassinated; I got a chance to help install that. Precious manuscripts, artifacts, other rare collection items, and then adjacent to that gallery and in the Great Hall to the opening of that, we will also be opening two new gift shops in the Jefferson Building in the beginning of June.

And then as of June the 1, I am looking at my colleague, but we have been working on this for so long together, that construction will begin on the new Youth Center called The Source, named by young people. And school groups will be able to come in, the young and the young at heart.

And then this coming September, construction activities will begin on the cornerstone of that experience, our first Orientation Gallery. And we are very excited about that. And just thank Congress for working with us on this.

Senator REED. Well, let me thank both of you, because it was a collaboration, and I deeply appreciate, and look forward to the opening.

With that, let me recognize Senator Fischer.

LIBRARY'S DIGITAL COLLECTIONS & STRATEGY

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome again to our panel today.

Dr. Hayden, core to the new strategic plan is expanding the Library's capacity and infrastructure for the digital collections. This includes new IT investments and improving staff skill sets in processing and handling digital content, to further these initiatives, the Library is requesting 13 new FTE and \$3.4 million in new resources.

Can you explain to us the strategic plan's vision for digital collections and how the fiscal year 2025 request will support collection's capacity, please?

Dr. HAYDEN. The title of the Library's Strategic Plan that was launched recently is "A Library for All"; and having the digital capacity to expand access to the collections is vital to that. The Library is now receiving more digital material than ever before. And we know that the future is digital. And more and more of the collections that are coming to the Library are, as they call it, born digital. And that means the only way that people can obtain access to the collections will be in a digital format.

And in a very short period of time, we have to collect the digital materials, different from analog materials. They can wait. But the digital content is coming in, it is like a fire hose now. Just for instance, since 2019, in 2023, we received 12.7 million digital collections. That is three times since 2019.

And so the current systems that we have, those out-of-date legacy systems can't ingest and make accessible that content. And we need staff that also can work with that. And that includes our IT staff as well.

So the request allows us to modernize the IT infrastructure, to increase the workflows and the processes, more efficient management, more improved service for the access, and then preserving that digital content as well. So the funding request really aligns with the Library's strategic plan of being accessible in the e-preferred future.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Dr. HAYDEN. It is exciting.

Senator FISCHER. It is. Can you tell me who qualifies for a job like that? Say I just, I want to do that, I want to be able to go through and help catalog that, what kind of background do I need? Is it mostly in IT?

Dr. HAYDEN. Well, there are various people who are involved.

Senator FISCHER. I guess I wouldn't qualify then.

Dr. HAYDEN. And it is a great recruitment tool in terms of digital natives that are looking at interesting projects. And so you have—they are actually teams, the people who are working on software development and also looking at the transition to the cloud. You have some straight technicians, but you also have content librarians and curators and subject matter specialists.

Senator FISCHER. So it is a melding?

Dr. HAYDEN. It is a melding. And we have these teams that are working together.

Senator FISCHER. Great.

Dr. HAYDEN. Very exciting time.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Mr. DiPietro, as I mentioned in my opening statement, the AOC must improve on keeping projects on time and on budget. A number of recent high-profile projects have resulted in significant delays and cost overruns. These project management issues appear to be systemic within the Agency.

Since you joined the AOC last year, what challenges have you witnessed with the Agency's planning, acquisition, and project management practices?

Mr. DiPIETRO. Thank you for that question. Maybe if I explain a little bit about how we manage projects that might help. So ideally, projects begin with some type of engineering or feasibility study that helps inform decision-makers on the general scope, the cost, the schedule of a project.

That also allows our Agency to determine the best way to execute that project from like an acquisition standpoint. So there is the traditional way of doing things where you hire a designer and they put together a design, a set of construction documents. They give it to the AOC and we bid it out and then we hire a contractor and then they construct the project for us.

There is other ways of doing it where you hire one contractor to design and build the entire project. It depends on the type of project you are doing, and then there's other forms of acquisition.

But what that study does is it allows us to determine the best way to proceed with a project, and it allows the stakeholders to be in a better position to make a decision on if they want to continue

with the project. And if they do, then you move into a design process. And there is different elements of the design, different phases.

You start out in a schematic design phase. You move to what we call design development. And then finally, the last phase is your construction documents, where you put together plans and specifications that a contractor uses to construct what you want them to build.

And as we move through each one of those phases, what happens is we get a better idea of the scope and the cost and the schedule of the project. So adhering to that form of project management or that system for project management gives us the best chance of having success with the project.

So not skipping steps and making sure we adhere to them, I think, is the best way to ensure that we are doing a good job in project management.

Senator FISCHER. As the project goes through those steps, you have time then also to take a considerate review of where the project is at during that too; did that happen before?

Mr. DiPIETRO. It should be happening as we are going through it. Sometimes we are a little bit rushed to do projects, and things get condensed in the project cycle. But overall, I think that is the best approach to making sure that we deliver projects on time, on budget, and within the scope.

LIBRARY STAFF ATTRITION AND RECRUITMENT

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Dr. Hayden, we have seen some attrition rates in staffing between 23- and 28 percent over the last three fiscal years. What is causing such a high attrition rate within this team? And along with the new personnel requested, what strategies will the Library utilize to try and stabilize that staffing issue?

Dr. HAYDEN. The request for this year is really targeted to one of the units that has the highest—one of the highest attrition rates, the Contracting Office. This is a Government-wide challenge, and OPM has deemed these contracting specialist, as hard-to-fill positions, and we know that.

Over the past 3 years, in Library, the Contracts and Grants Directorate has an attrition rate between 23 and 28 percent. And part of that is due to the increased volume and complexity of the contracts, especially the IT procurement.

Senator FISCHER. So is it an issue of—is it an issue of hiring the wrong person to begin with?

Dr. HAYDEN. Oh. No.

Senator FISCHER. Or just difficulty in the job?

Dr. HAYDEN. No.

Senator FISCHER. Problems with the team? What is it?

Dr. HAYDEN. First, in terms of recruiting. It is a very high-demand position with contracting, very competitive. Staff are leaving for higher pay and other benefits, and the increased volume and complexity of the types of contracts, so it has a high burnout as well, and expanding workloads. When staff members can see a better opportunity, they take it. We are really working on making sure that in this office, we are very attentive to not only incentives, but also the fact that we will have a cycle and to keep it, you know,

at as low a level as we can, but these are hard positions, they are competitive.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer. Senator Van Hollen, please.

‘A LIBRARY FOR ALL’ MISSION AND STATUS

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you both for your service. It is great to be here to listen to your testimony.

Dr. Hayden, you continue to make Maryland and Baltimore proud with your leadership at the Library of Congress. As you well know, one of the founding principles of the Pratt Library in Baltimore, which you led for years, was open access.

Enoch Pratt, when he began that library in 1882, said, and I quote, “That it would be for all, rich and poor without distinction of race or color”; provided everybody handled the books carefully and returned them when they were finished; I know you have that same mandate, mission, vision for the Library of Congress, and that underpins the Library of Congress’ A Library for All strategic plan and digitization effort.

Could you, Dr. Hayden, just speak a little bit to where you are in that process? Because I, like you, believe that when we have such an amazing national treasure and resource, we need to do everything we can to share it with the American people.

Dr. HAYDEN. Well, we actually are making sure we share it with everyone. We have the first Braille Edition of a strategic plan, the Library is very excited about making it possible for our patrons of the National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled able to see that the title page that says, “The Library of Congress is a library for you”; and the entire mission is to engage everyone, Congress and the American people, we are continuing and using the tools of the future to do that.

And so we will be expanding access through our digital collections and digital access. Our website is our digital front door, and more and more items will be available in that format, as well as being able to have the programming that we have accessible wherever anybody has a device, and even audio. So the entire plan is to make sure that we are not only providing access, but that we are looking to a future that will include all types of formats.

We are still going to have physical materials coming in for the next—and I know my staff are saying, okay, 50, 100 years, but there will be things coming in in the analog, and so we are preparing for that. We are also supporting our staff and making sure that they can grow with this new push that we have had.

And so it is an exciting time for the Library, and it is definitely a way to connect to all public libraries, and school libraries, and campus, and university libraries. And I often have said that in Baltimore, if I had had the Rosa Parks Papers to pull up to show a 10-year-old when they had that disturbance to see what Rosa Parks felt, and now they are digitized, that we could actually, anyone, anywhere could read what she felt.

LIBRARY COLLECTION STORAGE

Senator VAN HOLLEN. That is a wonderful example. And thank you for your—all your efforts to bring those treasures to everybody and make them more accessible. Of course, as we put more of the collection online, the Library has a vast collection of books, documents, music, and artifacts that need to be properly stored and preserved. And to that end, the Library has been engaged in an effort to build and move collections to storage modules at Fort Meade in the State of Maryland.

Could you speak to the progress of that effort and next steps, especially at storage modules six and seven, I believe they are—it is supposed to be completed in the coming years?

Dr. HAYDEN. And that really speaks to what is going on with the need to have a hybrid approach. We will still be collecting. So six and seven, in fact, module six is about, I believe, and we will—I will make sure that we get this for the record, filling up, and the plans, and we are working closely and we have worked closely with the Architect of the Capitol on the design for module eight, and anticipating that there will ultimately be at least nine of those storage units.

Ft. Meade Module Update—As of June 2024, Ft. Meade Module 6 is filled to 70 percent capacity. At its current fill rate Module 6 will reach full capacity by June 2025 just more than 1 year before Module 7 will become available for collection storage. The Library of Congress is currently establishing plans to utilize space at the Cabin Branch facility to bridge the gap between Module 6 and Module 7.

And as the design over the years has changed from a single structure to now double-sided, and so there have been advances in that, but that plan is in place and moving along on schedule.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Terrific. I know the committee, the subcommittee supports that effort.

Dr. DiPietro, again, thank you for your service. And as you know, the Office of the Architect of the Capitol has had a challenging few years, particularly difficult last year after the previous Architect was removed, and the leadership has had to be rebuilt without a permanent Architect yet in place.

I know you joined the team in 2023, and have just been in the role of acting secretary for a few months, but can you speak to your efforts to restore trust in the leadership and morale among the 2,400 AOC employees?

Mr. DIPIETRO. Certainly. Thank you for that question. So over the last year, not just myself, but our entire leadership team, we have been working to bring in new folks, our Agency's C-suite, which is kind of like our Board for the Agency, we have hired a new chief of staff, we hired a new chief financial officer, a new chief security officer, we just recently on-boarded a new chief administrative officer.

So we have a lot of new folks that are on that C-suite, and everybody is committed to working with our partners, and doing the best that we can to support the employees, the Architect of the Capitol. The one thing I can tell you that, you know, having been here just over a year, is we have got excellent employees, really great folks

who are frontline, who do the job of maintaining our buildings every day. I am very proud to be able to work with them. And you know, we are looking to fully support them and do the best we can to advance their careers.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. And thank you for all your efforts to restore confidence. And thank you for your good words about your team. Take care. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen.

On behalf of Senator Fischer and myself, thank you for your excellent testimony. We look forward to working with you. We understand this is a challenging time for budgets, but we also understand how essential, critical, and important your work is, both as the Library of Congress and as the Architect of the Capitol.

With that, Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the agencies for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

IMPACT OF FLAT BUDGET IN FISCAL 2025

Question. The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 resulted in strict levels for appropriations in Fiscal Year 2024 and has similarly strict levels for Fiscal Year 2025. As a result, the Committee will have to make tough decisions regarding the allocation of resources in the upcoming year. It will then be up to each legislative branch agency to utilize those resources to meet their respective missions, while addressing the needs of their workforce.

Please describe the impacts to your agency if the Fiscal Year 2025 allocation requires your agency's budget to remain at the Fiscal Year 2024 level. In particular, please describe the specific impacts the allocation would have on your personnel as well as your ability to meet the agency's short and long-term goals.

Answer. The Library's fiscal 2025 budget submission requested an increase of \$46 million over the fiscal 2024 funding levels. The Library's request includes \$29.8 million in mandatory pay-related costs, \$9.2 million in non-pay price level increases, and \$11.3 million for programmatic increases. Operating at the fiscal 2024 level in fiscal 2025 will in effect result in a reduction of \$39 million requested for mandatory pay-related costs and non-pay inflationary increases. This is an effective cut of 4.2% to the Library's funding in order to maintain fiscal 2024 level of service.

The fiscal 2025 request represents the most modest increase put forward in the current Librarian's tenure, with the majority of the increase consisting of mandatory pay and inflationary non-pay items. Operating at the fiscal 2024 funded level will disrupt and diminish the execution of the Library's long-term strategy of modernizing and optimizing systems, processes, and services to Congress outlined in the Library's Fiscal 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, "A Library for All."

A flat budget, with an effective reduction of \$29.8 million (equivalent to approximately 172 FTE) requested for mandatory pay in fiscal 2025, will affect the Library's workforce and its services in ways that risk diminishing the Library's all-important service to the Congress and the American people.

With approximately 64 percent of the Library's budget supporting staff pay, and Congressional Research Service (CRS) pay representing close to 90 percent of their budget, the Library has limited options for absorbing additional funding cuts from its non-pay accounts. The Library's first priority will be to protect its experienced workforce base by slowing or freezing hiring and not backfilling all but the most critical positions. Although constantly advancing technology allows the Library and its staff to operate more efficiently, it cannot replace key capabilities that directly serve the Congress and the American people, for example CRS analysts, librarians with specialized expertise, Copyright attorneys, IT project managers, and the staff

who lead constituent tours of the Jefferson Building. Maintaining critical staff skills is key to executing the Library's mission and strategic goals to expand access, enhance services, strengthen capacity, and foster innovation.

Degradation of Library services affects not only fiscal 2025, but also diminishes future support and services inherent in the skillsets of tenured staff and new specialized staff. The limitation on hiring and challenges in retention will directly affect timeliness of service to the Congress and the American people.

- Staff would lack mentors, leading to lost institutional knowledge and affecting transfer of skills and knowledge;
- Fewer preservation actions would threaten the safety of the most valuable collections;
- Exhibitions and events would be delayed or curtailed;
- Copyright registration processing would not be able to keep up with demand;
- CRS' productivity and work products would significantly be impacted; and
- Services of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), including book and magazine production and distribution, braille digitization, and support for network Libraries, would be affected.

Ultimately, absorbing the fiscal 2025 pay increases will result in fewer FTE and, with fewer people, the Library will lose capacity for service, resulting in lower levels of support. The non-pay portion of the Library's budget will be forced to absorb \$9.2 million in inflationary price level increases. There is little room for cutting programs or shifting costs since operations are interlinked throughout the Library, meaning that progress made in recent years will be diminished.

Over the last several years the Congress has been highly supportive of the Library's IT modernization and optimization plans, funding multiple initiatives to replace a multitude of legacy systems. To prevent more drastic measures on the personnel side, absorbing inflationary costs would have also have an impact on these programs. The development plans for these programs in fiscal 2025 and 2026 would be revised as necessary to operate within the fiscal constraints, not stopping but slowing development and implementation. Progress on recent initiatives such as the Library's Digital Library Services platform, continuous development for Congress.gov, and enhancing CRS's ability to perform quantitative analysis of both research and operational "big data" for congressional clients would be reduced. Progress on other recent initiatives such as continuous development for Copyright's Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), enterprise architecture and upgrades to NLS systems and services to patrons will also be delayed.

The Library will also not be able to start the new programmatic initiatives requested in the fiscal 2025 budget. These five initiatives have key places in the Library's strategy—scaling up capacity, modernizing and optimizing our processes and systems to manage the explosive growth in digital collections, enhancing the visitor experience with the Library, maintaining hard-to-fill contracting capacity, enhancing CRS's quantitative analysis and AI capabilities, and expanding the Digital Accessibility Program. Most importantly, not receiving funding for the Digital Collections Processing initiative will impact the Library's ability to provide connectivity and capacity to directly support the dramatic growth in digital format acquisitions and the e-preferred strategy.

Additionally, other non-pay areas of support will be affected, decreasing support to the Congress and service to the American people. Examples of impacted programs and services include, but are not limited to:

- Public outreach and services—reading room hours, Library events and signature programs such as the National Book Festival and Congressional Dialogues.
- Financial management capabilities and support for cross-serviced Legislative Branch Agencies.
- Custodial services and reduced cleanliness levels in all areas of the Library's campus.

Additionally, the Library will monitor the congressional actions for fiscal 2025 appropriations as they relate to the Financial Responsibility Act. Possible sequestration and further reductions would lead to more severe reduction strategies across all Library programs.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator REED. I will adjourn the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 3:21 p.m., Wednesday, May 15, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-124, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jack Reed (Chairman), presiding.
Present: Senators Reed, Murphy, Van Hollen, and Fischer.

SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE,
UNITED STATES SENATE
UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED

Senator REED. Good afternoon. The Subcommittee will come to order.

First, Chief Manger, I understand the Department is today grieving the passing of one of its officers, a 21-year Veteran of the Force. I simply want to express my gratitude and my sympathies to the Officer's family, and to the Department for your loss.

Mr. MANGER. Thank you, Senator.

Senator REED. I would like to welcome everyone, to the last of our fiscal year 2025 budget hearings for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.

Today, we have with us the Senate Sergeant at Arms, Ms. Karen Gibson; and the Chief of the United States Capitol Police, Chief J. Thomas Manger. I would like to thank you for joining us here today to testify on your Agencies' fiscal year 2025 budget request. And I ask unanimous consent that the witnesses' written testimony be placed in the hearing record.

Hearing no objection; so ordered.

Let me begin by again thanking the women and men of your agencies for the work that they do every day to facilitate the work of the Senate. It is because of their work that the Senate is able to perform its constitutional responsibilities on behalf of the American people.

As I said in our two previous hearings, the Legislative Branch Agencies have submitted fiscal year 2025 budget requests that account for a \$544 million increase over the fiscal year 2024 Legislative Branch enacted appropriations, while we do not yet have subcommittee allocations, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 enacted strict levels for appropriations again in fiscal year 2025. As such,

we will be making very difficult decisions for the allocation of resources provided to the Legislative Branch in fiscal year 2025.

It will then fall upon the heads of each Legislative Branch Agency to utilize those resources to meet their respective missions while addressing the needs of their workforce. This will not be an easy fiscal year, but I am confident that the Legislative Branch can meet this challenge.

For fiscal year 2025, the Sergeant at Arms is requesting \$345 million in appropriated funds, which is an increase of \$34 million over the fiscal year 2024 enacted level. I would like to thank General Gibson and her team for finding additional efficiencies within the Agency's budget request, which has allowed for reduced funding request.

The requested increases provide funding for the annual cost of living adjustment, related cost, and locality pay, 17 new positions to support various Sergeant at Arms organizational elements, and salary adjustments for onboard personnel. Further, it provides funding for the Stars of Valor Fellowship Program.

The increase also provides for enhanced security, the continued modernization efforts within the organization, support for the Residential Security System Program, and State Office Security, and the continuation of cybersecurity enhancements.

General Gibson, thank you again for all that you and your team do to support the Senate community.

Today we will also be reviewing the United States Capitol Police's fiscal year 2025 budget request. Again, I would like to thank you, Chief Manger, and your team for all that you do to ensure the safety of the Capitol. It is a remarkable task, and you and your colleagues do it extremely well.

Included in this year's Department's budget request is a request for an appropriation of \$906 million for the United States Capitol Police, which is an increase of \$114.8 million from the fiscal year 2024 enacted level. This is an increase in both the salaries and the general expense appropriations. This increase provides for the annualization of salaries for onboard personnel in fiscal year 2024, increased over time for core mission and the upcoming Presidential Inauguration, funding for a new sworn and civilian set of positions, and the cost of living increase, and other miscellaneous salary payments.

The requested increase also provides for increased protective services support, and protective intelligence capabilities, contract to support for information technology activities to include cybersecurity efforts, funding to support the continuation of the Contracted Security Guard Program, technical and physical security equipment lifestyle replacement and upgrades, operational training programs, officer wellness initiatives, and various other non-personnel related costs.

The Department's request also supports four additional positions within the U.S. Capitol Police Office of Inspector General to address its expanding role, as well as a small increase in general expenses to maintain and enhance its operational capacity.

As we continue to grow the Department, it is important for us to also grow the capabilities of the Inspector General in order to keep pace with its oversight responsibilities.

Additionally, the Department's budget request includes \$49 million to support various continually—continuity of operations and continuity of government preparedness efforts.

I look forward to hearing from both of our witnesses in today's hearing.

Today, we will also be joined by Senator Murray, the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

And now, I will turn to the Ranking Member, and my colleague, Senator Fischer, for any remarks she might have.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DEB FISCHER

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, General Gibson and Chief Manger, for being with us this afternoon to discuss the fiscal year 2025 budget requests for your agencies.

Before I begin, I also want to express my sincere condolences to the family and to the Department, Chief Manger. You have our support during this difficult time.

I want to thank the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police and the Senate Sergeant at Arms for all the work they do to keep Congress, the Capitol Campus, and State offices safe and secure.

In recent years, the threat environment facing the Legislative Branch has increased significantly. I appreciate the work of both agencies to meet this evolving mission and security environment.

As Chairman Reed has mentioned, we face a difficult fiscal year ahead. While we will do all we can to support your agencies and their mission requirements, it is important that every Legislative Branch Agency be judicious stewards of their resources and achieve cost savings where possible.

General Gibson, for fiscal year 2025, the SAA seeks a roughly 12 percent increase above last year's enacted level, the request includes funding for physical and cybersecurity initiatives and additional FTEs to support operations across the Agency. In your testimony, I hope to hear how the SAA is implementing the significant resources provided in fiscal year 2024, including hiring for the new personnel positions that were funded. Additionally, I look forward to hearing how the fiscal year 2025 request will meet the security needs of the Senate.

Chief Manger, the Department is requesting \$906 million, an increase of 14.5 percent, above the fiscal year 2024 enacted level. The request includes new funding for congressional continuity of operations and an additional 118 funded FTE. I look forward to learning more about how the Department's fiscal year 2025 request plans to meet the increasing threat climate facing Congress.

In this difficult fiscal environment, we will carefully consider the needs of all our security related agencies and ensure their coordination and cooperation.

I thank our witnesses again for being here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator Fischer.

And now I will ask our witnesses, beginning with General Gibson, to give a brief opening statement, of approximately 5 minutes, to allow adequate time for questioning. Of course, the written testimony has already been made part of the record.

General Gibson, you are recognized.

**SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE,
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**STATEMENT OF HONORABLE KAREN H. GIBSON, SERGEANT AT ARMS
AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE, UNITED STATES SENATE**

General GIBSON. Thank you, Senator. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of the Sergeant at Arms' fiscal year 2025 budget request. I want to thank the subcommittees for supporting our initiatives, which have allowed us to improve security, modernize operations, and further enhance Senate services.

Senate security is among my foremost responsibilities. In the wake of numerous disruptive demonstrations both on and off Campus, we have conducted extensive proactive outreach and education to Senate and committee offices. We provide security awareness briefings, advise on best practices for event planning, arrange security escorts, and streamline coordination to address unwanted visitors and disruptive groups.

We coordinate with the Capitol Police to request local law enforcement support for off-Campus events and to provide security assessments and improvements at members' homes. Regarding State office security, I appreciate the enactment of Senate Bill 3222, which exempts certain security-related square footage and costs from State Office allowances.

I am grateful to Senator Klobuchar, to you, Senator Fischer, and to the entire Senate for this bill. Senators no longer have to choose between safety needs, like secure reception areas, and operational requirements, such as space for caseworkers. We have also expanded a program with the Federal Protective Service that allows Federal security officers at commercial State offices, if requested. And our cabinet shop has designed an attractive, cost-effective, lockable cabinet to safely store State office IT and security equipment.

We also work tirelessly to protect the Senate from increasingly sophisticated cyber threats, collaborating with the Capitol Police, the FBI, and others to identify, defend against, and mitigate critical cyber incidents.

Last year, we conducted the Senate's most comprehensive cyber-security assessment ever, and its results validated the success of our efforts.

The Sergeant at Arms' mission extends beyond security as we work to modernize services for the Senate community through efforts like the Digital Media Hub, which allows users to search and store official photos and order customizable prints all in one place, and a new Learning Center with online training tools and course registration and tracking.

Our recording studio has fully implemented closed captioning for committee broadcasts and will soon roll out a program to provide QR codes to attendees at hearings so they can monitor a live stream of the hearing with closed captioning via smartphone. We plan to build an app for Senate staff to access Employee Assistance Program resources on the go and will improve the flag ordering

process through an online storefront and flag satellite office in Hart.

We will also modify the Senate Employment Bulletin so that job seekers can apply for positions through an automated interface that allows offices to search the applicant pool with modern tools.

For fiscal year 2025, we request \$345 million and 1,054 positions to support senators, their staff, and constituents: “This is a decrease from our initial request and takes our budget request down from more than 12 percent to about 11 percent.”

We seek \$5 million in no-year funding to continue the hearing room renovations that replace aging audiovisual equipment, \$2.5 million for the Senate Residential Security System Program, and \$6.3 million for the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program, which will fund fellowships in Senate offices across the country for wounded or disabled veterans and Gold Star family members.

Other specific requests include a \$4 million increase for cybersecurity tools and contracts, \$4.3 million for a human capital management system to automate workforce management processes, \$1.5 million for the Help Desk IT contract, and \$1.3 million to expand IT enterprise services.

To ensure commonly used applications and services are backed up and archived, we request \$1 million to host and support them on reliant infrastructure with secure backup. Due to increasing prices for IT equipment and licenses, we also request \$775,000 for the Economic Allocation Fund. On a similar note, we seek a \$3 million increase to address rising Federal rent and construction costs, to harden State office reception areas and to improve State office readiness. We seek \$506,000 for an electronic gallery pass project, and \$600,000 to support the 60th Presidential Inauguration.

Of the 17 additional positions requested, four support critical functions for the Chief Information Officer and two support implementation of a Senate Intern Resource Office. Other FTEs address security, operations, and human capital shortfalls.

I remain deeply committed to supporting the needs of the Senate, as does my entire team. We are grateful to this committee for its support, and I am thankful for the dedicated staff of the Sergeant at Arms and for ongoing collaboration with partners to keep the Senate secure and functioning efficiently.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify on our fiscal year 2025 budget request and look forward to your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KAREN H. GIBSON, SERGEANT AT ARMS
AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of the Sergeant at Arms' Fiscal Year 2025 budget request.

I want to thank the subcommittee for supporting our initiatives, which have allowed us to improve security, modernize operations and further enhance the services we provide to the Senate community.

Senate security is among my most important responsibilities. In the wake of increasing confrontations and demonstrations on and off-campus, our offices of Member Outreach and Security Coordination and Security Planning and Police Coordination have conducted extensive proactive outreach and education to Senate and committee offices, providing security awareness briefings for Senators and staff, advising on best practices for event planning, arranging security escorts during Members' domestic travel, coordinating with the Capitol Police to request local law enforce-

ment support for events off Capitol grounds, streamlining coordination to address unwanted visitors or disruptive demonstration groups, and coordinating with the Capitol Police to conduct residential security assessments. In 2023, more than 4,200 requests for law enforcement assistance were addressed.

The Risk and Threat Management office works closely with the Capitol Police's Threat Analysis Section to identify and track hundreds of potential threats to Senators and pass timely information about potentially destabilizing events near Senate offices or near Senators' homes. We look forward to an even closer partnership once the Capitol Police stand up their Protective Intelligence Operations Center.

We are completing our second year of the Residential Security Support Program for home security improvements based on assessments conducted by the Capitol Police. The program covers the cost of equipment, installation, and monitoring services, and we are working with offices and the Capitol Police to provide additional security assessments at Members' homes. SAA staff have also worked with the Committee on Rules and Administration, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), and the Capitol Police to install Proximity Card Readers in seven Senate personal offices, five committee offices, and two support offices. Additional requests are pending installation or design.

In response to lessons learned, the Senate Operations Center has streamlined and refined communication processes in conjunction with the Capitol Police to ensure rapid dissemination of critical information about emergencies and campus access issues, reducing the time that Members and staff must wait for instructions on actions to take in an emergency.

One of the most complicated software builds completed this Congress was the creation of an Emergency Preparedness (EP) Mobile Application for the entire Senate. This application makes emergency preparedness information available room by room, allowing a Senate staffer to find information about evacuation, sheltering in place, or internal relocation regardless of their location, whether in a committee space, an office, the cafeteria, or the Senate-side of the Capitol. This app and all its information remain available even if the network is down. This significant upgrade to the emergency preparedness tools in the Senate was made possible through collaboration between the Chief Information Officer organization and Office of Emergency Preparedness.

The Office of Emergency Preparedness also provides training to prepare Members and staff for emergencies. Last year, the Office conducted almost 250 training sessions for 2,900 staff. They have innovated their offerings to provide interactive courses on Webster, allowing Senate staff to refresh their knowledge at any time. The Office also provides more detailed training for the Senate's 287 Office Emergency Coordinators and worked with them to update the Emergency Action Plans of 148 offices and 79 Continuity of Operation Plans. With the security of the entire Senate community in mind, the Office also trained over 40 members of the credentialed press on Capitol Hill emergency procedures and the use of escape hoods.

To improve security in over 420 state offices, the State Office Operations team worked with the Capitol Police and local law enforcement to provide security training at 43 Senators' state offices. Working closely with the Federal Protective Service (FPS), to date they have facilitated 89 state office facility security assessments and enrolled 37 Senators in a new program that allows them to request FPS Protective Security Officers at commercial state offices, a service previously only available in Federal buildings.

State Office Operations also provided initial physical security enhancements and existing system upgrades for 167 offices and conducted more than 500 service calls to maintain, repair, test, and inspect state office physical security systems. At this time, 99% of state offices have adopted some level of SAA-recommended and funded security enhancements.

A significant uptick in disruptive demonstrations prompted development of a tip sheet outlining best practices for state offices. Utilizing the new State Office Demonstration Room, State Office Operations provided security training and consultations to more than 500 staff representing 83 Senators over the last year. We continue the rollout of a state office alert and notification service to monitor, evaluate, and distribute customized emergency notifications directly to Senators and staff across the country, informing Senate users over 125,000 times of severe weather incidents, civil unrest, and major crime events near Senate offices.

Finally, the State Office Operations team, the SAA Cabinet Shop, and the Chief Information Officer collaborated to create a lockable IT cabinet for safely storing state office IT and security equipment. These attractive cabinets improve office operations and aesthetics by masking noise and neatly securing Senate network equipment and wiring. The previous alternative to this cabinet cost upwards of \$14,000

and took almost six weeks to construct. We built the new IT Security Cabinet in house and installed the first one in only four days!

To address persistent and increasingly significant cyber threats, our Chief Information Officer blocks, defends, and mitigates critical cyber events 24 hours a day. We have worked closely with the Capitol Police, the FBI, and other organizations in the cyber defense community to ensure the Senate receives early warning of penetration attempts, new indicators of compromise, and evolving adversary tactics. To improve the user experience while prioritizing security, in late 2025 we will move to a modern and centralized identity management system with single sign on to the network. Finally, in 2023, we successfully conducted the Senate's most comprehensive cybersecurity assessment ever, validating the success of our collective efforts. We plan to continue these assessments annually.

Of course, we also monitor traditional areas of risk. Senate Post Office staff screen mail for over 180 locations within the Capitol complex and last year safely processed and delivered more than 4.4 million incoming mail items while flagging nearly 800 suspicious mailings.

The SAA mission extends beyond security to include administrative and logistical support to the Senate community. I am proud of our efforts to improve and modernize those services as well.

One of the Chief Information Officer's most significant innovation projects is to migrate multiple stand-alone Senate services from old, legacy platforms to modern, integrated hubs. The first phase of this project migrates several services to ServiceNow, a hub for requesting IT support, tracking Help Desk tickets, submitting customer satisfaction surveys, and sharing IT knowledge base articles. We plan to expand ServiceNow by migrating three additional legacy systems to the hub: CAPFOR, which allows Members and staff to order items and services for their Capitol offices; TranSAAct, which allows offices to request many Sergeant at Arms services, review bills, link to frequently used websites, and log into other Senate applications without re-entering credentials; and Asset Manager, the Senate inventory system. When complete, this migration will eliminate a number of manual workflows, streamline asset management, and enable data-driven decisions.

The Senate Recording Studio has implemented closed captioning for all D.C.-based committee broadcasts and for some field hearings, enhancing accessibility by providing deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals with access to committee content. The Recording Studio also introduced the unofficial vote count tally displayed on the Senate floor channel, modernizing the broadcast of Senate proceedings. These improvements were made at the same time the studio broadcast more than 1,100 hours of Senate floor coverage and 613 hearings, while producing 481 TV studio shows and 755 radio shows. The Audio-Visual team also assisted with 801 events, and the Video Post-Production Department fulfilled 447 work requests, including 608 hours of editing.

In response to customer requests, Senate Photographic Services created a new photo browser, the Digital Media Hub, which provides a central location for offices' visual and media assets, including photos, videos, graphics, and audio files. It includes more than 1.4 million images and videos and allows users to search through photos, order customizable prints, and upload and store all office photography in one place. Importantly, the Hub is compliant with Senate Archival and National Archiving best practices. Senate Photographic Services staff also covered 3,400 assignments, photographing more than 70,000 images and producing nearly 34,000 photo prints, a 35% increase over 2022.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides some of the SAA's most popular services. In 2023, almost 5,600 employees attended EAP training or participated in wellbeing activities, and more than 3,500 employees accessed resources for personalized information and referrals addressing childcare, parenting, adult care, aging, education, legal concerns, or financial issues. The EAP also offers LifeCare, which helps Senate staff find everything from childcare services to specialized kits for college-bound children, and from licensed care options for elderly parents to home repair services. EAP has hired an additional counselor to help address the growing demand for staff resilience support.

The Joint Office of Training and Development rolled out a Learning Center hub that allows staff to register for all classes offered in the Senate and access online training tools. The Learning Center also allows managers to assign specific training to staff members and ensure that Senate-required anti-harassment, cybersecurity, and ethics training is completed.

Printing, Graphics and Direct Mail (PGDM) is working with Senate office customers to transition to a digital editing tool, PageProof, which will streamline the editing process. PGDM is also working to enhance the flag ordering process for Senate offices and constituents through the Direct XPress storefront and a flag satellite

office in Hart. Ninety offices currently utilize Direct Xpress, placing more than 5,300 online flag orders through the system.

The Senate Employment Office improved its services to Senate offices and job seekers with a new website, virtual information sessions, online resources, and an updated resume bank, which has grown from 1,100 registrants in 2020 to 5,500 in 2023. We will soon roll out an enhancement to the Job Advertisements in the Senate Employment Bulletin, which will provide unique job links for new job ads. Job seekers will be able to apply for positions in Senate offices through an automated collection process, and office staff will be able to search the applicant pool with a modern set of tools. The Senate Employment Bulletin will have a modern and dynamic look, and job seekers will be able to filter search criteria and set up email job alerts.

This year, the SAA established a new office for Program Management and Congressional Transition. The office is preparing for transition to the 119th Congress by updating transition materials for incoming Senators. We plan for early and consistent consultation with incoming and departing Senators, the Secretary of the Senate, the AOC, the Government Printing Office, and the General Services Administration to ensure a smooth transition for all parties.

We are also coordinating with partners across the Capitol, including the Secretary of the Senate, Capitol Police, and AOC, on our move out of the Postal Square Building and with the AOC and Senate Superintendent's office as we prepare to fully renovate Webster Hall in a way that does not interrupt services to the Page program.

Our Chief Financial Officer is overseeing implementation of the OneStream budget formulation application, which will be used to complete our annual budget and other critical business functions such as comprehensive financial reporting, salary forecasts, and expenditure tracking.

Our Financial Management team is also working closely with the Senate Financial Systems Program Office on an "eProcurement" project to migrate procurement related accounting functions from a custom application within the Financial Management Information System to an off-the-shelf software application within PeopleSoft.

Taken together, these two projects—one for budgeting and one for contract accounting—will enable the Senate PeopleSoft General Ledger to be a single source of entry ensuring data integrity and accurate reporting. This joint project between the Office of the Secretary and the Office of the Sergeant at Arms is an example of how well our two offices collaborate. Many thanks to Secretary Ann Berry and Mr. Dan Rubenstein with the Financial Systems Program Office for the collaboration that made this innovation possible.

We continue replacing aging audiovisual equipment and systems in Senate Hearing Rooms and are working with this Committee, the Committee on Rules and Administration, and the AOC to avoid equipment failure. We installed a self-service Postal kiosk in the Dirksen basement and expanded notary services to the Senate community. The Passport Office brought back "Passport Day on the Hill" and is currently hosting its second Global Entry/TSA PreCheck event on the Senate side of the Capitol.

These are not the only in-person activities to return to the Senate campus. We hosted representatives from 24 emergency response, emergency management, and related organizations in our National Preparedness Month Fair this year. In addition, our Wellness Fair saw record attendance, and 36 offices participated in the 2024 State Office Conference.

I am proud of our contributions to the U.S. Senate, many of which would not be possible without collaboration with partners, including the Secretary of the Senate, the AOC, Capitol Police, the Federal Protective Service, the General Services Administration, the Government Printing Office, our counterparts in the House of Representatives, local law enforcement agencies across the country, the Senate Financial System Program Office, and the Superintendent of the Senate. We have worked together to improve security and services for the Senate, and I look forward to continuing that work in the coming year.

For FY25, we request \$345,006,000 and 1,054 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. This increase of \$34,189,000 and 17 positions includes \$199,544,000 in our five-year expense account, \$131,685,000 in our salary account, and \$7,500,000 in our no-year accounts to renovate hearing rooms and for the Senate Residential Security System Program, as well as \$6,277,000 in no-year funding to support the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program.

Senate resolutions adopted in the 117th Congress created the fellowship programs for wounded or disabled veterans and Gold Star family members, and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration finalized regulations for the program in

March of this year. The program will provide 24-month, full-time fellowships in Senate offices across the country, with salary and benefits paid by the Sergeant at Arms. The fellowships are expected to provide first-hand experience for Gold Star family members and wounded or disabled veterans while allowing Senate offices to benefit from the fellows' expertise and resilience.

Out of the 17 additional positions we are requesting, four FTEs will support critical functions for the Chief Information Officer. Two positions will support the implementation of a Senate Intern Resource Office to share best practices for intern hiring, assist interns regarding their work environment, and promote awareness of internship opportunities in historically underrepresented communities. The remaining FTEs address additional needs in Capitol Operations, the Employee Assistance Program, Human Resources, Support Operations, the Executive Office, and the Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness and Continuity.

Our specific requests include a \$4,000,000 increase for cybersecurity. This money will go toward existing Governance, Risk and Compliance contracts, security operations, and audit contracts to fully implement a Risk Management Program. It will also fund cybersecurity tools to protect our supply chain, replace end-of-life-hardware, and cover recurring costs associated with implementing Zero Trust cybersecurity initiatives.

The SAA requests \$4,300,000 to purchase a Human Capital Management System that will streamline operations and automate business processes associated with workforce management. With over 1,000 employees to support, we have outgrown our piecemeal legacy systems and manual processes, which are both slow and prone to error, and must replace them with a modern system that integrates scheduling, time, attendance, leave tracking, payroll, overtime, and compliance.

Growing demands for data warehousing, long-term data retention, and file size growth (e.g., from digital media and database files) directly impacts storage capacity. Accounting for additional resources will be essential to meet the Senate's on-demand data storage needs. Accordingly, we request \$1,265,000 to support the increased growth of enterprise services offered to the Senate and increased resiliency and high availability within our secondary data center.

The widespread adoption of Microsoft 365 services, including Teams, OneDrive, and SharePoint Online, has increased the need for backup, archiving and export capabilities for these services when Senators depart. We must ensure these critical services are hosted on redundant and supported infrastructure with secure backup and request an additional \$1,051,000 to do so.

Our largest contract is for Senate IT support. With the projected award of a new contract for the Senate Help Desk IT support, we request \$1,500,000, to allow for a three-month transition period to ensure there is no impact on service to Senate offices.

We also request \$775,000 for the Economic Allocation Fund that supports software and hardware purchases by Senate offices and committees. This reflects higher prices for IT equipment and licenses requested by Senate offices.

We seek a \$3,077,000 increase for State offices to address rising Federal rent and construction costs, to harden secure reception areas, and to improve state office readiness. A \$65,000 increase for Capitol Operations will allow us to design and build additional custom IT cabinets for state offices to safely house and secure Senate IT equipment.

Our recent migration to a standardized phone system across all state offices and DC requires a more robust Wide Area Network Maintenance Contract, so we request \$218,000 to support Internet services and secure connections between the DC campus and all state offices.

In FY25, we request \$506,000 for an e-Gallery pass project, which will allow Senators to provide constituents with electronic passes for the Senate Galleries or for events such as swearing-in day at the beginning of each Congress. The e-Gallery pass will enable communication in real-time to passholders. For example, if a Senator was taking photographs with a student group who also had e-Gallery passes, an email to all pass holders could direct them to a change in location for the photograph.

We also request \$600,000 as one-time funding to support the 60th Inaugural Ceremonies. Funding will cover technical equipment such as large-scale video boards and development of event management and credentialing software utilized by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

We seek \$400,000 to build an EAP app to make employee assistance accessible on mobile phones, \$120,000 for contract labor for surge support in the ID Office during the 119th Congressional ID renewal period and to replace end of lifecycle ID printers, a \$100,000 increase to reimburse the Capitol Police for expenses incurred when they support Congressional delegations abroad, and \$35,000 for a Page Pro-

gram onboarding application to ensure efficient onboarding and to increase the security of sensitive personal information.

We remain dedicated to meeting the personal, physical, and cybersecurity needs of the Senate, as well as providing essential administrative and logistical support. We do so, seeking at all times to improve our effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

Thank you for your committed support of the Senate Sergeant at Arms and for the opportunity to discuss our accomplishments and our FY25 budget request.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, General.
Chief Manger, please.

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

STATEMENT OF CHIEF J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF OF POLICE, UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Mr. MANGER. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for your continued support of the women and men of the United States Capitol Police.

The support of Congress has allowed the Department to invest in critical aspects of its operation and address mission requirements of an increasing threat environment. To support the mission, the Department has prioritized staffing and the expansion of training, policy, and administrative functions, all of which ensure that USCP is positioned to meet the demands of today and into the future.

This support that Congress has allowed the Department has ensured that our mission requirements can be met. I can confidently tell you the Capitol is safer today than it was prior to January 6. Specifically, our 2025 budget reflects the Department's three key budget drivers, protecting the Capitol complex, countering the increasing threat environment to ensure member safety, and bolstering recruitment and retention.

Protecting the Capitol from threats while at the same time protecting members, staff, and the public is a complex operation that requires planning, coordination, and investment in physical and technical security; thus, the 2025 budget request provides funding needed to invest in security planning, equipment, and technology upgrades.

The Department's 2025 budget also includes a request for no-year funding to support the Congressional Continuity of Operations, or C-COOP. The major driver behind this request is the Department's need for an independent, in-house, and deployment capability to allow it to respond to changing environments. This funding will allow the Department to replicate the functions of the USCP Command Center at any C-COOP site to the fullest extent possible.

Our country is in the midst of a historical rise in threats. Over the past year, we have seen a dangerous rise in acts of violence against Members of Congress, their families, and staff. This changing landscape requires that the Department take a proactive approach to threat investigations and member protection by enhancing its intelligence gathering and sharing capabilities.

The number of increasingly—the number and increasing complexity of threats against members requires the acquisition of a cutting-edge technology that can help the Department navigate the

increasingly sophisticated climate that the cyber universe provides to criminal actors.

The fiscal year 2025 budget request is reflective of the Department's constant need to stay one step ahead of those who seek to do you harm. A significant focus for the Department centers on member safety in their home States and districts. With funding provided by Congress for the purpose of enhanced member protection, the Department created the Protective Intelligence Operations Center, or PIOC.

The PIOC serves as the Department's fusion center by centralizing member protection functions to include investigation intake, air operations monitoring, the tracking of Congressional details, intelligence analysis, and the Department's newly created Residential Security Program. This new protection model will allow the Department to increase its ability to protect members, whether they are here in D.C. or away from the Capitol complex.

Thus, our 2025 budget request also focuses heavily on increases to both sworn and civilian staffing levels. We are requesting \$642 million to fund salaries and benefits for 2,247 sworn employees and 583 civilian employees. This represents approximately 75 percent of the Department's total annual budget request.

One of the most critical aspects in protecting the campus members, staff, and visitors is our ability to utilize mutual aid from our law enforcement partners in the National Capitol region and throughout the country, this aid acts as a force multiplier for large-scale events at the Capitol or to assist in the protection of members and their families when outside of the Capitol region.

Increasing the Department's ranks continues to be a key priority. Given the increasing numbers of threats, it is not surprising that the bulk of our staffing efforts are focused on continued expansion of the Department's Protective Services Bureau, or PSB, which includes the Dignitary Protection Division. With the support of Congress, the Department's staffing levels have increased, but we still have more to do, especially as we work to right-size the organization to curb overtime.

There is more work to do, and we must do it within the context of a strategic, holistic, and deliberate strategy. Long-term strategies take time to develop and implement in a coordinated fashion. Working in close collaboration with Congress, I am confident that our upward trajectory will continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. And I look forward to your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF J. THOMAS MANGER, CHIEF, UNITED STATES CAPITOL
POLICE

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States Capitol Police (USCP or Department) budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. The Department greatly appreciates the Subcommittee's continued support of the women and men of the U.S. Capitol Police, who courageously carry out their duties of protecting the Members of Congress, the Capitol Complex, and the legislative process each and every day. The support of Congress has allowed the Department to invest in critical aspects of its operation and address the mission requirements of an increasing threat environment. I can confidently tell you that the Capitol is safer today than it was

prior to January 6. We must continue this upward trajectory. To that end, the Department FY2025 budget request includes \$906 million to fulfill our mission.

The USCP mission is unlike any other. Protecting the Congress requires a 24/7, no-fail operation. Our teams work around the clock to staff doors, corridors, plazas, garages, and street corners; to protect Members of Congress in and outside of the Capitol Complex; to gather, analyze, and disseminate intelligence; to oversee physical and technical security measures; and to plan and respond to demonstrations. To support this mission the Department has prioritized staffing and the expansion of the training, policy, and administrative functions, all of which ensure the USCP is positioned to meet the demands of today and into the future.

The Department continues to move forward and improve its operations. Earlier this year, the Department formally implemented the reorganization plan approved by the Committees. The new organizational structure is a reflection of the Department's growth and transformation, and is designed to enhance program oversight and operational efficiencies in response to recommendations provided by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). For example, the Department's policy, audit, and training functions are now centralized under the new Assistant Chief of Police for Standards and Training Operations, and includes training liaisons that work in coordination with all Department components for maximum efficiency and accountability. Likewise, the reorganization established the Intelligence Services Bureau, fully centralizing functional oversight of intelligence analysis and streamlining information gathering and dissemination. The reorganization also established the Office of the Chief of Staff to manage the Howard C. Leibengood Center for Wellness, the Office of Accountability and Improvement, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and the Public Information Office. In short, the reorganization demonstrates the Department's continuing efforts to enhance its operating posture in a post-January 6 environment.

The Department's FY 2025 budget request reflects the need to keep pushing forward with our progress. It provides the resources needed to continue the modernization of internal operations and shift toward a more protective model of law enforcement. Specifically, the FY 2025 budget request reflects the Department's three key budget drivers:

1. Protecting the Capitol Complex,
2. countering the increasing threat environment to ensure Member safety, and
3. bolstering recruitment and retention.

I will focus on each of these key areas in turn.

CAPITOL COMPLEX PROTECTION

Protecting the Capitol Complex from threats while, at the same time protecting Members, staff, and the public, is a complex operation that requires planning, coordination, and investment in physical and technical security.

The Department's operational planning and coordination efforts continue to improve substantially following January 6. The Department's multi-phased approach to the event planning processes and the establishment of the Incident Action Plans (IAPs) for all large and high-profile events, was a major paradigm shift. The IAPs serve as a comprehensive blueprint for intelligence, operational, command, and communication plans. The Department also engages in inter-agency coordination calls before all large and high-profile events, pre- and post-event officer briefings, after-action reports, and other measures designed to improve overall coordination and efficiency. The Department's FY 2025 budget request will allow us to continue improvements to these planning and command and control coordination functions.

Ensuring the Department's physical and technical security capabilities are sufficiently staffed and state-of-the art is another key objective of the Department's efforts to increase the physical security of Members and the Capitol Complex. The Department must keep abreast of advancements in technology to ensure it can properly identify, monitor, and deter threats, whether they exist on the ground or in cyber space. Thus, the FY 2025 budget request provides the funding needed to invest in security planning, equipment, and technology upgrades.

The Department's FY 2025 budget also includes a request for no-year funding to support the Congressional Continuity of Operations (C-COOP). The major driver behind this request is the Department's need for an independent, in-house response and deployment capability to allow it to respond to changing environments, and, ultimately, to support our mission to protect Members of Congress. This funding will allow the Department to replicate the functions of the USCP Command Center at any C-COOP site to the fullest extent possible, to include a mobile capability to support the immediate use of command and control and Leadership Coordination Cen-

ter requirements for Congressional leadership. This request also provides for Information Technology equipment to establish connectivity and radio communication capabilities, as well as physical security requirements including deployable screening equipment, mobile vehicle barriers, mobile kiosks, and deployable barriers. Through close coordination with the Capitol Police Board and other stakeholders, the Department's budget request reflects a multi-year strategy to develop and implement one aspect of this multi-faceted program. This request will ensure the appropriate flexibility to procure the equipment necessary to build out C-COOP initiatives and implement as each phase is ready.

INCREASING THREAT CLIMATE

Our country is in the midst of an historical rise in threats that is flamed by the current climate of heated political rhetoric; it is both unprecedented and alarming. Over the past year, we have seen a dangerous rise in acts of violence against Members of Congress, their families, and staff. This changing landscape requires that the Department take a proactive approach to threats investigation and Member protection by enhancing its intelligence gathering and sharing capabilities. The number and increasing complexity of threats against Members requires the acquisition of cutting-edge technology that can help the Department navigate the increasingly sophisticated climate the cyber universe provides to criminal actors. We need to identify and deter threats before they materialize. The FY 2025 budget request is reflective of the Department's constant need to stay one step ahead of those who seek to do you harm.

A significant focus for the Department centers on Member security in their home states and districts. With funding provided by Congress for the purpose of enhanced member protection, the Department created the Protective Intelligence Operations Center (PIOC). The PIOC serves as the Department's fusion center by centralizing Member protection functions, to include investigations intake, air operations monitoring, the tracking of Congressional details, intelligence analysis, and the Department's newly created residential security program. This new protection model allows the Department to increase its ability to protect Members whether they are in or away from the Capitol Complex.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

When I joined the Department nearly 3 years ago, I recognized that staffing was a critical vulnerability. In fact, the Department had been understaffed for years. It took January 6 and the pandemic to make that clear. I immediately took action to maximize our capacity to hire and train new recruits to build the Department's bench strength, and I am proud of what we have accomplished to date. The Department simply cannot operate without the women and men who protect, serve, and support our mission, day in and day out. They are tough, resilient, and committed. I cannot emphasize that enough.

Thus, our FY 2025 budget request focuses heavily on increases to both sworn and civilian staffing levels. We are requesting \$642 million to fund salaries and benefits for 2,247 sworn employees and 583 civilian employees. This represents approximately 75 percent of the Department's total annual budget request and includes funding to cover items such as overtime costs and to support the Department's student loan repayment program.

As we approach the next election, the Department's staffing posture could not be more critical. The demands on our staff have already accelerated as we prepare for upcoming conventions and Member campaigns, while simultaneously handling an increasing workload as we investigate and deter threats, plan and coordinate large-scale events, and deploy specialty units to manage demonstrations—all while protecting Congress, staff, and the public on a daily basis. But our efforts are paying off and we are on the right track. Indeed, the Inspector General noted in a recent report that the Department has improved internal and external coordination of major events with an enhanced emphasis on inter-agency crisis management.

One of the most critical aspects in protecting the Campus, Members, staff and visitors is the ability to utilize mutual aid from our law enforcement partners in the National Capitol Region (NCR) and throughout the country. This aid acts as a force multiplier for large scale events at the Capitol, or to assist in the protection of Members and their families when outside of the NCR. I would like to thank this Committee and the Congress for providing the vital funding for the USCP to reimburse agencies who assist the Department by supplying mutual aid and look forward to working with the Committee to extend this critical tool.

Increasing the Department's ranks continues to be a key priority, for both sworn and civilian personnel. The FY 2025 budget request emphasizes the centrality of

this objective to the Department's overall strategic plan. Given the increasing number of threats, it is not surprising that the bulk of our staffing efforts are focused on the continued expansion of the Department's Protective Services Bureau, or PSB, which includes the Dignitary Protection Division. As threats to Members of Congress, their families, and staff continue to dominate our attention, the Department has been forced to shift resources to support threat-based protective details, Congressional events outside of the U.S. Capitol grounds, residential security assignments, and Member escort details. These efforts cannot succeed without increased funding.

We have made—and continue to make—good use of the funding Congress has provided to us thus far. Specific, new initiatives to increase our PSB ranks include a program to recruit lateral, entry-level, and reemployed annuitants. The program provides a direct path for external applicants to fill Special Agent or Investigator positions. While the Department continues to hire from within, this new recruitment campaign has provided another mechanism to increase staffing levels across all operational areas by expanding the scope of our applicant pool. The Department's FY 2025 budget request reflects this new hiring strategy and includes funding to support an increase of 126 Special Agents, half through these new, external hiring initiatives and half through internal selection.

While the Department's efforts to expand staffing are robust and remain our number one priority, we, like other law enforcement agencies, face challenges recruiting qualified personnel. Nation-wide, law enforcement agencies are experiencing record levels of attrition. Compounding the problem is the fact that officers hired during the post-9/11 surge are now eligible—or required—to retire. In addition to the new hiring initiatives described above, the Department's budget provides funding to continue our strategy of hiring and training 288 new recruits every year to increase sworn capabilities within Uniformed Operations. Equally important to the Department's efforts to maintain its operational posture are the administrative and support functions that are the backbone of the Department. Without an adequately staffed administrative infrastructure, particularly in the Offices of Human Resources and Information Services, the Department's operational mission cannot be maintained, much less enhanced.

With the support of Congress, the Department's staffing levels have increased, but we still have more to do, especially as we work to right-size the organization and curb overtime to support more sustainable work-life balances for our workforce. A key element of this effort came in FY 2023, when the USCP, at the request of Congress, hired an outside vendor to conduct an extensive, Department-wide analysis of the five pillars that make up the organization—mission, staffing, structure, training, and technology. The result was the Concept of Operations report, which was delivered at the end of February of this year. The Concept of Operations report provides 30 recommendations, as well as a valuable framework and implementation roadmap that will allow the Department to develop a model for integrated decision-making and strategic planning to better inform future operations and resource requirements. The Department is currently in the process of evaluating the recommendations to consider which to implement and how. While this work is ongoing, the Department has included funding in the FY 2025 budget request to build the initial infrastructure in three areas—staffing, training, and technology—that closely align with USCP initiatives already underway.

CONCLUSION

The events of January 6 shifted the Department's priorities and accelerated the timeline for executing them. The Department and its workforce have risen to meet the evolving demands placed on the USCP in recent years. From addressing over 95% of the OIG January 6 recommendations, to implementing the reorganization, to developing innovative hiring strategies, the Department has made great strides. None of this would have been possible without the support of this subcommittee.

However, as I stated at the outset, we are not done. There is more work to do. And we must do it within the context of a strategic, holistic, and deliberate strategy. Long term strategies take time to develop and implement in a coordinated fashion. Working in close collaboration with the Congress, I am confident that our upward trajectory will continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Chief and General. The first question, which I pose to all of our witnesses, is that in

this very difficult budget time, if you have to operate close to the 2024 budget, what are the key elements that you will lose?

Could you allude to that, General?

General GIBSON. Certainly. Thank you, Senator. I have given this question, and my whole team has given this question, a lot of thought. First, I would start with the reasons why our budget continues to grow. First is inflationary factors, which account for a significant portion of the \$3 million additional dollars we are seeking for State Office Operations, in that Senators haven't moved to different offices, they are not more lavish spaces, and they aren't bigger, but the landlords have raised the rent, and that is not something we control.

Similarly, the \$775,000 for the Economic Allocation Fund is the cost of purchasing the same equipment we always have for offices. And even the COLA, the Senate authorized Cost of Living Allowance, reflects that inflation.

Another reason our budget continues to grow is new programs that we have begun, such as, the Residential Security System Program and the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program. A third reason would be numerous modernization projects. I could list a number of those.

The final reason, and really this is a key driver that we should discuss separately in greater detail, is the costs associated with operating in the digital domain. While we may be recording votes by pencil in the Chamber, the demand and reliance on data elsewhere is booming, and the costs of managing, storing, and securing data are going up for a broad number of reasons, particularly when you operate in the unique way that the Senate does. I would like to explore that separately with the committee.

If we had a flat-line budget, first, we would institute a hiring freeze. I would inform Sergeant at Arms' employees not to expect, probably, a cost of living allowance in 2025. I think we could look at some of those new projects or modernization efforts and either postpone them or downscale them. Hearing room renovations could be slowed. We could slow the pace of the Stars of Valor Fellowships. We could postpone things like electronic gallery passes.

The two other areas we could look at would be accepting greater risk, particularly for cybersecurity, or changing some of our standard ways of operating, specifically related to the way we retain, store, and secure data.

Before making any of those changes, I would consult with this Committee, with the Committee on Rules and Administration, and with the bipartisan Senate leadership. I think that would be a very useful conversation for us to have, regardless of the budget outcome.

Senator REED. Thank you, General.

Chief, the same question; if you have a flat-line budget, what do you have to sacrifice?

Mr. MANGER. So we have made tremendous strides over the last 3 years in terms of addressing the deficiencies, the shortcomings, the failures that were identified after January 6. And much of that required additional staffing. Certainly a recognition that just staffing to fill the number of posts that we might have around the complex is not going to help us in terms of the increasing workload due

to threats, you look at the number of demonstrations that we are handling, and that sort of thing.

So I think that if we were not able to get the additional resources that we are asking for, we would have to go back to just making sure we were just staffing all the necessary posts. But some of the advances that we have made in terms of our response capability to demonstrations, to a lot of the large events that occur in and around the Capitol, we would go back to having to hold officers over, pull them off posts, backfill with overtime, which was the model for many years here. And we have tried to get away from that for a number of reasons. But we would go back to more of that model.

But I think that what would be most frustrating is that I have talked for, the last couple of years, and I think the committee is aware of the increase in the number of threats that we are dealing with today compared to four or 5 years ago. And it shows no sign of abating. And so our ability to address those threats, investigate those threats, provide additional safety and security for staff, for members, for the district staffs across the country, would be halted.

Because much of what we are asking for in this budget is directly related to member security and safety with regard to those threats. And I think that we would continue to struggle to keep up with the workload because we would not have the additional staffing that we need to really investigate those cases the way we would like to.

Senator REED. Thank you. General, the chief information officer of your office is using the ServiceNow Governance, Risk, and Compliance module to automate identification. You talked about the need for much more sophisticated cyber operations. How is this implementation going?

General GIBSON. That implementation, Senator, is going well. We have been pleased. ServiceNow is a top-tier industrial product that is used across many sectors of the economy. It is modern and it is secure. It allows for improved business processes and office productivity. It offers faster deployment of technical services and ability to scale quickly. It provides us with useful trends that allow us to allocate resources as needed for issues that pop up on our networks. We also use it for IT service management, otherwise known as the "help desk".

Some of our budget request for fiscal year 2025 is to migrate a number of other discrete, kind of bespoke, disconnected platforms across the Senate to ServiceNow. We think that will serve us well.

Senator REED. In this year's budget, you are asking for ServiceNow, Information Technology Operations Management module, which I presume is an enhanced version of the current system. And what will that add?

General GIBSON. What we would like to do is migrate three additional systems that people currently access elsewhere to ServiceNow. One is CAPFOR, which is how offices ask for items for Capitol office spaces, such as keys, furniture, special cleaning services, and room rearrangement.

Another is Asset Manager. It is a separate discrete system that maintains an inventory of all the equipment that is issued to offices. The third system is TranSAAct. TranSAAct is more than 20 years old. The code is so old it is very difficult to modify. In fact,

we pay several million dollars for coders who can still keep that system going. We would like to migrate those three systems in fiscal year 2025 to ServiceNow.

Senator REED. Thank you. Well, as someone who studied basic at West Point, maybe I could qualify for your new—

General GIBSON. Senator, we are always hiring.

Senator REED. Thank you. Thank you. It is nice of to know.

Senator Fischer, please.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for both of you to begin, please. In fiscal year 2024, the Legislative Branch Act provided significant increases to both the agencies for expenses, salary, hiring new personnel. As we know, the bill came halfway through the fiscal year, giving you limited time to implement those increases. I want to hear how executing the fiscal year 2024 funding increases, how that is going, particularly how the pace of hiring the newly funded FTE positions is progressing?

As we face a difficult outlook here for fiscal year 2025, I think it is important to make sure that your agencies can fully implement those fiscal year 2024 resources and hiring before we consider fiscal year 2025.

So Chief, would you like to begin, please?

Mr. MANGER. It is always a challenge when you can get the positions, but the challenge is, can you actually recruit, hire, and train the people and actually get them out in the field. I know this from my previous jobs where I worked years, and years, and years and seemed to never be able to get ahead of attrition. I can tell you that for the last 3 years, we have not only gotten ahead of attrition, but we have added around 100 additional sworn officers each year.

And so this is great news, especially when you look around the country at what is happening in police departments around the country that are having no success in increasing their numbers.

So there is a lot of reasons for that, and many of them are the support that this Committee and Congress has given the Capitol Police so that we are competitive, both for sworn and civilian ranks, when we advertise a position, we are competitive in terms of being able to compete with other government agencies, other law enforcement agencies.

I certainly have to give a shout-out to my recruiting folks who do a phenomenal job at making sure the interest and the number of applications that we get continues to be through the roof.

Senator FISCHER. Are you on pace with allocating those resources? Are you ahead of schedule on them? My concern is, you had a late start with the resources that you were given there. Where are you on that? Do you feel pretty comfortable with how it is going?

Mr. MANGER. Yes, I do. In fact, we were looking at this year, we are doing an academy class every month, we looked at this year and actually had to make sure that we weren't running over our allocation, because we were keeping up. Yes, we are doing better with sworn, we are still working on the civilian side as well, but we are making progress with both.

Senator FISCHER. Good. General, how are you doing?

General GIBSON. Senator, if I may, I would like to provide the specific details and numbers separately following the hearing. I can

tell you in some areas we have done well, and one area, specifically, remains a challenge. For additional security positions, such as the Residential Security System Program, we have made progress to fill our positions. Those positions are very important to our execution of the security mission.

Hiring for the Employee Assistance Program has not been an issue, nor has it been an issue to hire staff to synchronize activities across the Sergeant at Arms, including for our interaction with the Rules Committee. I think we have seen a benefit there, as well as in some additional hiring for our Continuity of Government Programs.

The key area where we remain challenged is in the CIO. We have double digits of vacancies, may be over 30, hence the request for only four additional positions for the CIO in fiscal year 2025. We recognize that we do still have many vacancies to fill there. That is probably our greatest challenge.

Senator FISCHER. Okay. So you are being realistic about the request that you are making—

General GIBSON. I believe so. Yes. Yes.

Senator FISCHER [continuing]. When you know you have a lot more vacancies, but you are realistic in that area.

General GIBSON. Particularly in that area, yes.

Senator FISCHER. Good. Thank you.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Senator Fischer, let me—

Senator FISCHER. I was still going.

Senator REED. Oh. I am sorry.

Senator FISCHER. Did you think I was buzzing out, Mr. Chairman?

Senator REED. My mistake. I apologize.

Senator FISCHER. General Gibson, the request highlights that for fiscal year 2024 and fiscal year 2025, the priority for the Office of Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Continuity its modernization of security capabilities, particularly Campus access control improvements, and predictive threat analysis through open source monitoring and software. I would like to know more about those efforts that you are having. What improvements is the SAA making in access control, and how do all these new technologies factor in that, please?

General GIBSON. Access control, Senator, is largely the installation of proximity card readers in a number of offices. Unfortunately, as we began to install these, it was slower than many people hoped. It is very much a group effort, and I believe we are on track now. We have prioritized requests from the offices and committees. We have worked together with the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police to streamline the design for those systems and order parts in advance. We hold project meetings twice a month, and we have regular, transparent reporting to the Rules Committee on the progress of proximity card reader installation.

In terms of threat tracking, it is really less about the introduction of additional technologies, and more about the infusion of some very strong leadership on our team. I see great value-add in the research and the additional analysis that has been done regarding

the threats that are being identified against senators, as well as a much closer collaboration and partnership with the Capitol Police.

I look forward to the stand-up of the PIOC, the Protective Intelligence Operations Center. We will have a seat in there as we do in the Command Center, and I think that will be a very, very useful and fruitful partnership.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Well, thank you, Senator Fisher. I apologize for being preemptive. Truly.

Let me recognize Chairman Murray, please.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you, Chair Reed. This hearing is really important because the Office of the Senate Sergeant at Arms and the Capitol Police do work that is absolutely critical to every single one of us on this Committee.

Sergeant Gibson, Chief Manger, I want to thank both of you and all of your teams for all that you do. Every member, every staffer, every visitor here in our Nation's Capitol owes you a huge debt of gratitude for keeping this place running and keeping it safe. So it is important to me, the work you do and the sacrifices your team makes never go unacknowledged or get taken for granted.

At every hour, whether it is weekends, holidays, every single day, members of the Capitol Police are here making sure that we have security of the Nation's Capitol, and we all probably walked by several of them as we came here. So I want both of you to know that I think I speak for all of our colleagues when I say we are incredibly grateful for the work you do, and I want to make sure we get you the resources that you need in the year ahead.

And before I do get to my questions, I do understand that you lost an officer this morning. Echoing my colleagues from earlier, I want to extend my condolences to the Officer's family and to your entire Department.

Chief Manger, let me start with you. The Department has worked really hard to recruit and train and deploy the necessary personnel to address the increased mission requirements resulting from the current threat environment towards Congress. Do you have sufficient personnel to support the Dignitary Protection Division and meet your operational mission without burning out your current protective agents?

Mr. MANGER. In a word, no. That was one of the priorities in the last couple of years to ensure that we increase the staffing in our Dignitary Protection Division. The demand has increased, and in fact, the model in which we provide protection needed to be enhanced as well for a number of reasons.

I know that we have officers that work double shifts routinely. We have to stop that. It is not healthy for the officers, and it is not really a healthy way for us to schedule people, knowing that people have to work the amount of overtime that some of these agents have to work. So you will see in the fiscal year 2025 year budget requests for additional personnel, as you saw in fiscal year 2024, and I think that is one of the priorities for us.

Senator MURRAY. Good. You answered Senator Fischer on recruitment. How is recruitment going for that? Do you need the additional slots, or is it the recruitment?

Mr. MANGER. We need the additional slots, and in addition to the recruiting on just the Uniformed Service side where you get a lot of uniformed services officers that want to move into that career opportunity and work DPD. We are also instituting another strategy where we are hiring people straight into, to be dignitary protection agents. And so we have got both of those strategies to try and ensure that we are recruiting—

Senator MURRAY. And how is recruitment going on that?

Mr. MANGER. It is going okay. That was just started. I think we have only gotten one class through so far, of the folks that we hired directly to DPD. So it is something we just started. And if we get the positions, I think we will have no trouble finding folks that either want to come directly in, or some of these younger officers who are looking to become special agents and work in DPD.

Senator MURRAY. Okay. With the increased threat levels that we are seeing, how are things going with the enhancement of the Department's Protective Intelligence Capability?

Mr. MANGER. It is going well. It is just trying to keep up with the caseload. And I think what we have in place is working, but it is the volume that we have got to address. And so we have got good folks, good training, I think with the partnership with the folks in our Intelligence Bureau, working with our Investigations Division, we have got a good system. We just need more people. And that is the reason for the request in the fiscal year 2025 budget.

Senator MURRAY. Okay. And Sergeant Gibson, the SSA requested two full-time equivalent positions to support the Senate Intern Resource Office. How will this office actually support Senate interns while also maintaining the independence of Senate employing offices?

General GIBSON. Certainly. Thank you, Senator, for that question. This office would be intended to complement offices' efforts and certainly not in any way be redundant, duplicative or competitive. Our intent would be, in partnership with the Secretary of the Senate, to promulgate and share best practices for hiring, to provide a draft handbook for offices, and to offer guidance, training, support, and assistance to interns regarding their working environment. We want to connect with offices on funding rules and regulations for internships to ensure those are commonly understood and followed.

We also hope to coordinate and facilitate a variety of seminars and programs that could be standardized across various Senate offices. Perhaps special tours that are offered, like climbing to the top of the Dome, or meeting with other offices in the Senate, perhaps the Parliamentarian's Office, where interns could learn about the Senate as an institution. We would work to make things like that available to interns of every office and committee.

Senator MURRAY. Okay, thank you.

General GIBSON. Um-hum.

Senator MURRAY. And Sergeant Gibson, let me ask you about the Residential Security System Program, it is an important part, I know, of this multi-layered security plan for senators and their families. How is the implementation of that going?

General GIBSON. I think it is going well, Senator. Thank you. We have obligated and expensed approximately \$4 million since fiscal year 24 appropriations bill was enacted. We have signed memorandums of understanding with 19 senators.

Senator MURRAY. So we are seeing increased use?

General GIBSON. Oh, yes. Yes. And I would highlight, we have had, in the last 5 years, 122 residential security assessments of senators. Considering that there are probably 190, 185 Senate residences, if you count Washington and Home States, 123 of those, have had residential security assessments that we conduct with the Capitol Police.

Senator MURRAY. And are you confident that the requested funding level is sufficient to support the requests that you are getting for this?

General GIBSON. It has been thus far. I think if every senator signed a memorandum of understanding for their home, we might need to seek additional funding. But to date, it has been adequate.

Senator MURRAY. Okay, thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I think it is really critical that we all understand the importance of making sure this Committee has the resources it needs for the personnel. So thank you.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Senator Van Hollen, please.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank both of you for your service and your testimony.

And Chief Manger, I am sorry about the loss of one of your officers recently.

And for those of my colleagues who don't know this, Chief Manger at one point was the chief of police in Montgomery County, Maryland, my home county. And we were very glad to share him with the United States Congress. Thank you for all your work.

And to Sergeant at Arms Gibson, thank you as well.

So my question is to really both of you, in turn, which is, you know, we are at a very polarized time in our country, politically. We all witnessed the attacks on the Capitol of January 6, 2001 (sic). We don't know what the outcome of the November elections will be, but what we do know is we should be prepared for anything. So what each of your offices doing to prepare for the inauguration? And what each of your offices doing to prepare for whatever day it is that we count the ballots?

Maybe starting with you, Chief Manger.

Mr. MANGER. So we have spent the last three-and-a-half years preparing for the election, the next January 6, or whenever we count the ballots, and the next inauguration. And I will tell you, with confidence; that we are prepared for those. We still have work to do in terms of sustained—you know, building a model that can be sustained for years to come. But we are ready for these events upcoming.

Much of this has to do with staffing, but it also has to do with training. It has to do with equipment. And it has to do, much to do with our ability to get mutual aid here on the Campus when we need it. And the funding that this Committee and Congress gave to us to get that mutual aid, to be able to reimburse police agencies that assist us, whether they are assisting us here on this Campus,

which we have done many, many times, or assist us across the country with events that perhaps we can't get out to, but they can provide the security, has been invaluable.

And so just that we—there were things that we needed to do over the last 3 years just to provide the protection, security, and safety that we needed to on this campus every day. And we have accomplished so many things and we are in a good position right now.

As I mentioned earlier, I think that the number of threats, the caseload there of investigations that we have to do, some of the follow-up that is required in some of those investigations, that is where we need to continue to increase our staffing so we can keep up with that increased workload. But I can assure you that we are positioned exactly where we need to be and we will be prepared for the next inauguration.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Chief.

General GIBSON. Thank you, Senator. I would like to highlight some of the things that have changed since January, 2021. First, from a physical security perspective, the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, together with the Architect of the Capitol and the Chief of Police, conducted a Campus physical security assessment in 2022, and then prioritized funding to address shortcomings and to reinforce the building and the grounds.

We now have a 24-hour fence, which you may have seen deployed several times. It can go up very rapidly and come down rapidly. We have developed standardized guidelines, as a Capitol Police Board, for determining when the fence should go up. The Capitol Police Board itself, I think, has demonstrated a much more sound decisionmaking process than what was evidenced in 2021.

And I say that having been part of a team that, on behalf of the House of Representatives in February 2021, looked at the shortcomings of the Capitol Police and House security in the wake of January 6.

We also have processes in place now, as the chief has mentioned, for requests for assistance, whether that is mutual aid from other law enforcement or from the Department of Defense. The processes are understood, and the requests can be generated relatively rapidly. And very importantly, we have the legislation that allows the chief of police to declare an emergency and ask for assistance without having to convene the Capitol Police Board to approve his actions in advance.

There have also been significant improvements in intelligence: he lash-up with other agencies, the elevation of the intelligence function within the Capitol Police Department to a Bureau, and hiring very qualified professionals to work there, who are working very closely with a broad variety of law enforcement.

I receive those briefings and updates, and I can tell you they are much superior to what was in place several years ago.

From a Sergeant at Arms perspective, we have increased our ability to have situational understanding and awareness of what is happening. I was at a meeting this morning off Campus, and I was receiving near real-time updates on what was happening with the suspicious package that was delivered at the RNC Headquarters, just south of the Capitol.

We also have an ability to communicate that information and have refined our systems after a couple of hiccups to communicate what is happening from a security perspective to the Senate community. We have also hired more trauma-informed counselors for our Employee Assistance Program to instill a greater sense of psychological safety on the part of staff, some of whom were quite shaken on January 6. So we are strengthening our mental readiness.

The Department has also put in place some very standardized, structured and disciplined event planning processes and teams, and we participate in that. We are committed to a robust planning process for January 6, and for the inauguration, and are already having discussions with Secret Service, FBI, and others about what is expected on those days.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you. Thank you both. That is reassuring. I do want to say something about the mutual aid, because it is a reminder that not only were Capitol Hill Police attacked on that day, so were police from the District of Columbia, and other places. I am glad we are getting more prepared.

On the issue of the fence, I want to thank you and the Sergeant at Arms Office for working with me, and former Senator Blunt, and others. We were very opposed to having a fence that created a fortress-like atmosphere because we want the Capitol to be open, but we also wanted to make sure that when necessary, we had the means to put in those barriers. So thank you for working on that.

And on your internship program, I am glad you are putting that together as someone who is very instrumental in creating the Senate-paid Internship Program. We look forward to working with you and your office on that.

General GIBSON. Thank you, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Senator Van Hollen. Let me ask a few more questions, and then recognize Senator Fischer.

Chief, one of the issues that has always been prevalent over the last several years is the excess overtime you have to charge. Can you give us a sense of whether we are retaining and hiring enough personnel so that overtime is not such a critical issue?

Mr. MANGER. It is getting better. We still have a ways to go. Not that anyone wants a history lesson, but the Capitol Police was chronically understaffed for many, many years. And so we are getting to a point, and I can tell you, especially on the uniformed services side, we are now doing things the way they should have been done for a long time. I mean, we are not having to pull an officer off a post every time a demonstration occurs, every time something occurs on the Plaza. We have folks that are able to be first responders to events without having to pull people off posts and then backfill them with overtime.

So it is improving. But the reason I keep asking for additional positions, especially on the protection services side, is because we are understaffed on DPD. We don't have—we are still making people work double shifts, and the overtime is still much higher than it should be for an Agency to keep their officers well rested and healthy.

So as we continue to add agents that are doing threat investigations, as we continue to add agents that are being—for dignitary protection, you will see the overtime demands go down in those bureaus as well.

Senator REED. Very good. I believe, and I might be in error, that at one time you coordinated with local police for dignitary protection when an individual member is in their home district or elsewhere. Is that still the case?

Mr. MANGER. We still do have memorandums of understanding with departments across the country to assist us when needed to provide protection, whether it is threat based or whether it is a member who has a detail.

Senator REED. All right. General, one of the issues you mentioned is the Employee Assistance Program as a critical resource, and you also alluded to the mobile application. Could you amplify what you mean by that and how critical it is?

General GIBSON. Certainly. Thank you, Senator. We have seen nothing but an increase in demand for the services of EAP. It is a tremendous way to improve the overall health and wellness of the workforce. We have expanded our staff considerably, and we now extend the hours when appointments can be made from 8:00 in the morning to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. These are considerable investments. They are very worthy investments. We think they improve productivity of offices, and they help with employee retention. Many staff feel very stressed, whether it is from the work environment here at the Capitol, or in a State Office where staff may be confronting very disgruntled, unhappy constituents, or just the stress of life itself. Having a resource like EAP can make the difference between choosing to continue serving the Senate, or saying this is too much, I have got to find another place to work. When that happens, the Senate office is faced with hiring and training a new person to perform that work.

We want to build an EAP app because, even though 99 percent of Senate offices have had someone in the last year who used Employee Assistance Program resources, it is really important to increase the availability of the resources at any time, and to lower any sense of stigma that might be felt for seeking that kind of assistance.

We can lower those barriers by increasing accessibility and access to information, making it available on a phone, and providing some early intervention and perhaps some health assessment tools. We can boost employee engagement and track personal wellness. There are a variety of other things that we think we can do that will both lower that barrier to access and decrease stigma, and that will enable employees to have EAP access at any time.

Senator REED. So if an employee feels particularly stressed, they can get on the app and be connected to a counselor quickly?

General GIBSON. Potentially, I think if it was a real emergency. But I think it would be perhaps some meditation tools and resources that you could see who to call for this, who to call for that, if it really is an emergency.

Senator REED. Very good. Thank you.

Senator FISCHER, please.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Gibson, as you know, the Rules Committee has now released the regulations for the fellowship programs for our Wounded and Disabled Veterans and Gold Star family members. Congress provided SAA with \$6.3 million to set up the program. These are really, I think, important fellowship programs. The fellows and the Senate as a whole are going to benefit from them. With the regulations that are now released, and funding on hand, can you give us an update on the fellowships and a time line, if you have a time line in place, on when we may be expecting to see our first group of fellows?

General GIBSON. Thank you, Senator. I would like to provide the detailed time line separately. When you asked the question about which of our vacancies we have been able to fill, this is one we were able to fill. Lindsey Brand is the coordinator. She is a veteran and a former fellowship holder, and she feels very strongly about this program. She is a fantastic person, very enthusiastic, a great person to have leading this program.

I think we will begin to see some fellows towards the end of this year. Lindsey is a recent employee of ours and has begun to work with the Rules Committee. I would like to provide the detailed time line of when we will see our fellows arriving, but we are very excited about this program. Thank you.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you very much. For both of you, it is extremely important, obviously, that the Capitol Campus both has its physical security and its cyber security. That is also important for our State offices and staff as well. How is the threat environment out there towards our State offices? I know it varies by members, varies by States, but how is that evolving, and how do your agencies coordinate with those State offices when it comes to physical security?

General GIBSON. Senator, thank you for the question. Our State Office Operations team and our Senate Operations Center coordinate daily with State offices. In terms of the threat, there are also environmental threats that we track very closely, including tornadoes, floods, and other things that may threaten Senate offices. There is typically an awareness if that is going to happen at the local level already, but we certainly track those very closely as well as any kind of damage that may result. We are also able to share information very promptly about potential demonstrations, and then alert the Capitol Police to work with local law enforcement when that is needed.

We notify State offices if there is a demonstration planned outside their building, perhaps sometimes even targeting their office. Then those offices can make a decision if they want to close early that day, or if they want to telework. We communicate that kind of information as we receive it.

We are very thankful for the legislation, as I mentioned in my opening comments, that ensure security enhancements don't count as part of the square footage allowances for State offices. And we have made a strong push to create secure reception areas, as modeled in the State Office Demonstration Room in the basement of the Russell Senate Office Building.

We are working through a pilot to provide ballistic film on some office windows that will not appear, to Senator Van Hollen's com-

ments, like a fortress, but it will add additional security, and we are very excited about that.

You did ask about the threat. I think there have always been angry constituents. By having some of these security measures in place can help, even if it is simply a camera and a locked door. We have specific instances we can point to where staff saw someone in full tactical gear outside their office buzzing the button, and staff did not open the door. We have had people who have taken baseball bats to secure reception areas' glass, and the glass has held.

I think these security enhancements are really important. The most critical thing we can do, though, to keep those folks secure is to ensure they are trained and that they know things like keeping the door locked.

Senator FISCHER. Yes. Thank you.

Mr. MANGER. So I think General Gibson had a very good, comprehensive answer. I just would add one issue of swatting. This is we have seen it, it sort of comes in waves, and so we have been working with, I know that 911 centers around the country have been trying to do a better job at identifying those swatting calls and not just dispatching them without any context.

And I also am aware that the FBI is actually making a little bit more headway in terms of making some arrests, many of them overseas, so the more arrests we can make, the more deterrence there might be from people trying to, you know, continue this activity.

Senator FISCHER. Very good. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator REED. Well, thank you very much, Senator Fischer. And let me thank you, General Gibson, and Chief Manger.

This concludes the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing regarding fiscal year 2025 funding for the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, and the United States Capitol Police.

Again, I thank General Gibson and Chief Manger for testifying today.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

The hearing record will remain open for 7 days, allowing Members to submit statements and/or questions for the record, which should be sent to the subcommittee by close of business on Wednesday, May 29, 2024.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the agencies for response subsequent to the hearing:]

No questions were submitted for the record.

CONCLUSION OF HEARINGS

Senator REED. This concludes the scheduled hearings for fiscal year 2025 budget request from Legislative Branch agencies.

The committee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 22, subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

LIST OF WITNESSES, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PREPARED STATEMENTS

	Page
Architect of the Capitol, Questions Submitted to	73
DiPietro, Joseph R., Acting Architect, Architect of the Capitol:	
Prepared Statement of	62
Statement of	61
Dodaro, Hon. Gene, Comptroller General, Government Accountability Office:	
Questions Submitted to	40
Statement of	4
Fischer, Deb, U.S. Senator From Nebraska, Opening Statement of	3, 47, 77
Gibson, Honorable Karen H., Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate,	
Prepared Statement of	79
Halpern, Honorable Hugh Nathaniel, Director, Government Publishing Office:	
Prepared Statement of	15
Questions Submitted to	41
Statement of	15
Hayden, Hon. Dr. Carla, The Librarian of Congress:	
Prepared Statement of	49
Statement of	48
Library of Congress, Questions Submitted to	73
Manger, J. Thomas, Chief, United States Capitol Police:	
Prepared Statement of	85
Statement of	84
Newlen, Robert Randolph, Director, Congressional Research Service, Prepared	
Statement of	57
Perlmutter, Shira, Register of Copyrights and Director, U.S. Copyright Office,	
Prepared Statement of	52
Reed, Senator Jack, U.S. Senator From Rhode Island:	
Opening Statement of.....	1, 45, 75
Questions Submitted by.....	40, 41, 43, 73
Swagel, Hon. Dr. Phillip Director, Congressional Budget Office:	
Questions Submitted to	43
Statement of	21

SUBJECT INDEX

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL		Page
I. Overview		63
II. Supporting the Senate Community		63
III. Modern Management of Aging Infrastructure		64
IV. Recognizing Employee Accomplishments & Meeting Mission Requirements		64
V. Conclusion		64
'A Library For All' Mission and Status		71
Additional Committee Questions		73
Budget Levels and Agency Impacts		64
Impact of Flat Budget in Fiscal 2025		73
Library:		
Collection Storage		72
Information Technology Priorities		65
Staff Attrition and Recruitment		70
Library's Digital Collections & Strategy		68
Library's Visitor Experience		67
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE		
Additional Committee Questions		40
CBO:		
Budget Request and its Consequences for Staffing and Output		24
Enhancing Transparency		28
Requested Information and Authorities		26
Strengthening Responsiveness		28
Impact to GAO of a Flatline Fiscal Year 2025 Allocation		31
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE		
Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request		6
GAO's Mission		14
Connect		14
GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE		
A Snapshot of GPO's Business		17
Breaking Down GPO's Revenue		18
Building the Tools to Deliver on the Vision of an America Informed		18
Charting a Course for the Future		16
GPO's FY 2025 Appropriations Request		19
Making Government Information Available to the Public		18
Production		17
Some Key Accomplishments		19
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS		
Additional Committee Questions		73
Architect of the Capitol		45

	Page
Conclusion	61
Continuous Development of Information Technology	54
Fiscal:	
2024 Re-Submissions	51
2025 Budget Request and Program Increases	60
Funding and Update to 2025 Budget Request	56
Key Accomplishments Over the Past Year	53
Service to Congress During Fiscal 2023	57
Strategic Initiatives	58

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Additional Committee Question	100
Capitol Complex Protection	86
Conclusion	88
Increasing Threat Climate	87
Recruitment and Retention	87

UNITED STATES SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE
SENATE, UNITED STATES SENATE

Additional Committee Questions	100
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